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AMERICAN BUSINESS IN THE AMERICAN NOVEL

by John Erskine

THE first American book to be singled out by the Nobel jury was a story about business. The Prize was given to Sinclair Lewis for his general excellence as a novelist, but in particular for his portrait of Babbitt.

The protest which we heard at home against this award implied that business is not our controlling ideal, that our culture should have been recognized. We wonder what these critics would have said if the award had gone to such a book as Booth Tarkington's *The Plutocrat*, the story of the rough and ready Mr. Tinker, who has amassed a fortune and who with the utmost good will and with no subtlety at all crashes about in European society to the astonishment of that part of the world, and to the amusement of his fellow countrymen. George Babbitt is a character more profound, more refined, than the Plutocrat, but probably we should have been better pleased if Europe had admired Mr. Tinker. Why did the Nobel jury believe, as apparently it did believe, that *Babbitt* was a truer portrait? And why should some of us have preferred *The Plutocrat*?

The answer is, I think, that although both books start from much the same facts, *The Plutocrat* presents them from the American point of view, and *Babbitt* presents them not from the American point of view but the European.

The European reader, when he comes on a business man in a novel, interprets him by certain race memories. The Greeks, to go back no further, left us a picture of the ancient trader, not flattering. In Hesiod, for example, all trade is a public confession of poverty and want. You exchange commodities with other places and lands only because your own soil is defective and inadequate. In any dream of a golden age you are sure to mention the hope that your land may eventually produce everything necessary, so that all trade may be abandoned and you may pass your days in peace and honour. Of course even in Hesiod's time, or Homer's, there were people who were in business and who liked it. They were known frankly as pirates.

The economic interpreters have discovered in the unfolding of Roman history an attitude toward business which the Romans

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probably were not conscious of. At no period has man questioned the importance of a food supply, and in Rome the question of food was critical, but business is not the same thing as agriculture. The Roman had no higher opinion than the Greek of the man who lived by trade. To him the money-lender was at best a suspect and at worst a criminal. Only that life, he thought, was entirely noble which derived its sustenance directly from the elements by human effort, and with the blessing of the gods. The effort, of course, might be someone else's effort, but so long as that someone else was a slave, his employment seemed to have little to do with business; he was an implement rather than an employee.

The mediaeval attitude toward trade merely exaggerated the ancient prejudices. And oddly enough, when Europe approached the great expansion of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the beginnings of the modern chapter of business, a growing sense of the importance of capital and of raw materials and of international exchange was quite effectually balanced, in the average man's thought and in polite literature, by the increased importance of the courtier, the crusading gentleman, who to function properly had to be rich, but who because of his supposed spiritual preoccupations could not sully his fingers with gold. He subsisted on his lands, by the toil of others, obscure men, and by the business adroitness of his stewards, only less obscure, who marketed his produce for him and did the actual paying of his bills.

The early settlements in America, whether in Virginia or in Massachusetts, served, as we now can see, the development of the world's business, yet this economic fact was somewhat hidden from the settlers themselves by such spiritual ideals as the economist rarely takes account of, but the novelist and the dramatist always must. The empire which the Englishmen were building in Virginia, like all the colonies which Raleigh and his contemporaries dreamed of, had for motive a mixture of patriotism, love of adventure, desire for power. The settlement of Massachusetts, whatever its economic by-products, was for the Pilgrims and Puritans a religious expedition. In either case, south or north, the successful accomplishment of material prosperity, the immediate access to food, shelter and warmth, was interpreted as a sign of divine approval. The American Thanksgiving Day is the key to our unique conception of business—that festival in which church and state join to acknowledge material welfare, not because it is material, but because we believe it is consecrated by an ultimate purpose, however vague, and because it is already glamorous with the adventure we passed through to reach it.

The essence of the American attitude toward business, therefore, whether we examine it in life or in novels, is faith in progress. The phrase need not be defined too precisely. Most of us think we know what it means. We are convinced that roads should be built, water-systems constructed, hospitals put up, new homes erected, schools and playgrounds established. We believe in this kind of progress. It costs money. It involves business.

The American approaches business from this angle because his residence on this continent began in terms of hardship, but at the same time he brought with him standards of civilization and culture. He had the singular experience of starting here from primitive conditions without being primitive. The importance of improving those first conditions was so self-evident, and was so deeply impressed upon him, that he continues to believe in the necessity of material improvement even now when his physical comforts are on the average beyond what the rest of the world enjoys. Furthermore, he asks only this of the business man: that he should be culturally on the up grade. Whether the business man is still but partly educated is of little moment to the American provided that he is better educated than he once was.

Because of the difference in tradition, the

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European has little sympathy for the business interpreted in the American way. The European gentleman finds no great difficulty in identifying the will of God with the kind of service which his class can render to the state, but he is annoyed if the business man, especially the American, sees a relation between religion and material prosperity. He feels that such a confusion is hypocritical. The American, however, is aware here of no confusion at all. His job is still the same as that of the Pilgrim Fathers—he has a country to build up. If the Pilgrim Fathers are honoured for having cut down the trees, for having built houses and roads, he cannot see that his own activities are less important or less noble, even though he may now be called a real estate agent, or realtor. He knows that the early settlements reported to Europe, to the great satisfaction of European gentlemen at the time, the rapid enlargement of their boundaries, the growth of the population, the multiplication of their conveniences and comforts. He sees no reason why he should not still report his own progress in the same terms, announcing that his town will soon be the largest in the state, and that the wealth per capita is rising. If you say that his interest in life is materialistic or mean, he won't understand you. Is he boasting? He is not. He is thanking God.

A book like *The Plutocrat*, therefore, records the American's way of interpreting himself in his most characteristic occupation. Or a book like Hergesheimer's *The Three Black Pennys*. In one case we have a man who judged by European standards of culture is incomplete, but who judged by his own beginnings has multiplied all his talents tenfold. If there is culture in the world which he does not possess, the lack of it does not disturb him, for he has no doubt that in time his descendants, in this case his charming daughter, Libby Tinker, continuing her father's powers of acquisition, will have appropriated all the culture there is. And when he reflects upon the steps by which he made himself, he cannot be so ungrateful as to consider any of them sordid or mean; in retrospect they are consecrated by the end which they served. Mr. Hergesheimer's book interests us less in the individual than in the family, it portrays a more extended progress, a determined and protracted struggle of a temperament against nature and against—in more senses than one—the raw material of life. Mr. Tarkington emphasizes for us the good humour, the pleasant comedy of his hero; Mr. Hergesheimer emphasizes the darker drama of American business, where the business becomes a parallel or symbol of human character. Either emphasis is native to us.

Though Sinclair Lewis has observed American life more closely than most of us, he reads it not with American but with European eyes. It was appropriate that he should criticize American literature from Sweden rather than from the Middle West. Quite clearly he has his doubts about American business, but his doubts really are, in the European way, about all business. The smallness of small towns was immortalized in *Madame Bovary* long before *Main Street* was written, and if we had only the two books to inform us, we might well believe that Gopher Prairie offered to the American novelist little of human nature not already recorded by the French writer. Sinclair Lewis includes in his picture all the facts; he omits only our understanding of them. If you pass from an aristocratic circle, in an established civilization where the business sources of comfort are discreetly hidden, to the rougher, more limited world of Gopher Prairie, the conclusion must be that Gopher Prairie is tiresome, futile, lost in its cheerful ignorance. But if you approach Gopher Prairie as the natives of that place do approach it, with the memory of its earlier condition, you will be as cheerful as they.

Whatever his own philosophy, Sinclair Lewis indicates in *Main Street* at least some of the grounds upon which the American point of view is based. He asks us to see

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Gopher Prairie through the eyes of Carol Milford, a young woman educated much beyond her intelligence, who goes to the western town in the hope of uplifting it. Her first impressions of the place remain with her to the end; she finds it hopelessly ugly and vulgar. But the same train which brought her to Gopher Prairie, we are told, also brought Miss Bea Sarenson, "a stalwart, corn-colored, laughing young woman who was bored by farm work and desired the excitements of city life". To her, Gopher Prairie seemed a paradise. It offered her the things she couldn't find on a farm. She became the servant in Carol's house, and progressed from satisfaction to satisfaction.

If Lewis had stressed the self-congratulation of Miss Bea Sarenson, who was making her way from a limited to a less limited world, his story would have seemed to the American reader true; but he chose to emphasize the attitude of Carol Milford, who feels that in removing to Gopher Prairie she is going downhill culturally. To the American reader she seems like a visiting European novelist.

The rather simple-minded business men of Gopher Prairie and Zenith were sensitive to spiritual levels which they had not yet reached. It is in the novelist's power to turn this fact against them or to make it stand to their credit. The cheerful American business man may seem smug, patronizing, or impudent, when he makes his conventional references to the intellectual life or the religious or the artistic; an unsympathetic hearer might criticize him for talking about what he does not understand. No American, however, finds difficulty in sympathizing with one who has come up as far as he can, and who is aware of a larger life than his own. We are content that he should be cheerful about it. An apparent smugness in such cases is sometimes the result merely of the resolve to be a good sport and not mourn publicly over what now can't be helped. If our neighbor were openly troubled by his sense of incompleteness, he would be a disturbing figure, perhaps too distressing for society or for literature. Mr. Lewis has here portrayed George F. Babbitt correctly, no matter what his emphasis. Babbitt is aware of his own incompleteness, he is uneasy over certain hollow aspects of his life, he will be satisfied only with a much greater fineness than he personally is likely to attain—and he recognizes his social duty to remain cheerful, to keep up his pep, to boost.

What did the Nobel judges make out of the concluding paragraph of *Babbitt*? If the book is rightly read, those lines give the booster's mood, clear at last—the tragedy of incompleteness, the resolve not to let progress stop with himself.

"'Well—' Babbitt crossed the floor, slowly, ponderously, seeming a little old. 'I've always wanted you to have a college degree.' He meditatively stamped across the floor again. 'But I've never—Now, for heaven's sake, don't repeat this to your mother, or she'd remove what little hair I've got left—but practically, I've never done a single thing I've wanted to in my whole life! I don't know's I've accomplished anything except just get along. I figure out I've made about a quarter of an inch out of a possible hundred rods. Well, maybe you'll carry things on further. I don't know. But I do get a kind of sneaking pleasure out of the fact that you knew what you wanted to do and did it. Well, those folks in there will try to bully you, and tame you down. Tell 'em to go to the devil! I'll back you. Take your factory job, if you want to. Don't be scared of the family. No, nor all of Zenith. Nor of yourself, the way I've been. Go ahead, old man! The world is yours!'"

II

The race question at first sight would not seem to be related to a philosophy of business, but in American literature it is. Other countries have suffered race conflicts and have been built up or ruined by race migra-

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tion, but where they have been built up, the migration has usually resulted in the conquest of a weaker civilization by a stronger. We can't fairly say that the stronger civilization has carried with it always a higher culture; the Saracens driven from Western Europe enjoyed at the moment perhaps a higher culture than their conquerors. But in general each superimposed culture has had the right to consider itself superior, and therefore it has been able to afford a certain tolerance of what it misplaced. If the Normans imposed a language and a literature upon the Saxons, they did so not by way of missionary work, and not because they thought Saxon culture a menace to themselves, but incidentally and with no sense of strain. It was Saxon culture which did the worrying.

In America, however, from the moment of the first settlements our culture has been recruited by waves of immigration—that is, from classes of Europeans or Africans or Asiatics who, whatever else they brought with them, did not bring an assured sense of cultural superiority. They have immensely influenced our civilization, and ultimately our literature. They have influenced it, as it were, from the bottom, and usually with an unsympathetic if not antagonistic eye upon whatever culture was here when they came. Since they were compelled by circumstances to work their way up in the world, as we say, the millions who have landed at Ellis Island and the thousands brought here earlier in slave ships have accepted without difficulty the American respect for business as a ladder to upper levels, but they have generally been slow to admit that the culture on those upper levels was as good as what they brought with them. The Negro has wanted to advance the cause of Negro art, the Russian, as he has gathered economic power, has insisted upon Russian art—each racial or national strain, provided that it came to us on a low economic level, has tried to achieve here the cultural development which was not possible for it at home; and, in order to make room for that development, all these mounting race influences have joined in discrediting the cultural inheritance of the first settlers in Virginia or New York, in Pennsylvania or Massachusetts. Oddly enough, this jealousy of what was already in this country has led the immigrant to turn against that part of his heritage which got here before he did. Puritanism was founded on the Old Testament, but the immigrant Jew has on the whole been the advocate of any literature sooner than of his matchless scriptures. New England culture in the nineteenth century had many contacts with Italian poetry, but the Italian population of Boston and Cambridge has probably added little to the appreciation of Dante in that locality.

This succession of cultural influences from the bottom rather than from the top of the economic ladder is, so far as I know, peculiar to America. In Europe and in the East, folklore has often been the raw material of polite literature, but it has never been imposed upon polite literature by the peasant class itself. In our country we have no peasant class and practically no folk-lore, but only a debate of cultures in which the more recent immigrant is often the aggressively eloquent, and economic success in general seems accompanied by a certain cultural defeat.

For this reason our business men may appear to Europeans further detached from the cultural movement than as individuals they are. Their class is detached, and as individuals they are likely to be retrospective, fond of a culture which is already passing, quoting the poets of whom the latest mode is disposed to make fun. Since retrospective culture is to some degree sterile at best, the European whose tradition is uninterrupted can easily misinterpret it. The men of Gopher Prairie and the citizens of Zenith seem a little silly because their gestures toward culture are all toward reputations which no longer carry authority. Yet it would be difficult to draw the portrait of any American, no matter how intellectual or emancipated, without

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producing the same futile impression—unless indeed the reader has enjoyed the same economic social background as that character. All that the novelist has to do to make the American seem foolish is to let him glance at Shakespeare, Milton, Tennyson, or Longfellow. But one quotation from a Russian poet will save the day.

Against the background of this phenomenon there is something refreshingly lyrical, something heroic, in the complete satisfaction of Mr. Tinker, the Plutocrat, with his own racial culture, such as it is. He may not quote Shakespeare or Milton, nor does he quote the Rock of Ages, but he is sure they are there. His superb confidence, even in the face of the other cultures migrating upon him, may be unjustified, but we feel it is a splendid error. He is unabashed and unafraid, even in the presence of the New and Enlightened Drama:

"'Listen!' Tinker said. 'My wife wanted to get up and go out right in the middle of the first act; and I pretty near had to hold her down; but after that she was willing to stay to see just how far they *would* go. Besides, nobody there knew us and we didn't have our daughter with us. A friend of mine from my city had been to it, and he told me I oughtn't to miss it. Well, sir, it would pretty near make a horse blush; and *some* of the stuff they pulled—well, the gallery laughed right out! What was funny to me, though, most of 'em downstairs sat as solemn as an egg and never turned a hair. If you'd told me a few years ago I'd ever hear such talk outside of some old left-over livery-stable in the backwoods I'd 'a' thought you were crazy! They tell me they're pretty nearly all like that in New York now; but they'll have to go some to beat this one! It was certainly what you might call spicy. Yes, sir, some rancid!'

"'Comedy?' Mr. Wackstle asked.

"'No, it didn't seem meant to be. They came out with these things lookin' as serious as a postman in a blizzard: that's what made the gallery laugh, I guess. No; you wouldn't call it a comedy, though the hero of it ran off with his daughter-in-law, a right good-lookin' actress; but she took an overdose of laudanum or something and died, so it didn't seem meant for a comedy.'

"'What was the name of it?'

"'Peculiar name,' Tinker replied. 'Pasturage'—something like 'The Pasturage Scene.' No; that wasn't it, not 'Pasturage,' I remember—they called it 'The Pastoral Scene.' That's it. High-brow *name*; but when you come to what some of 'em *said* in it—oh, Boy! not so high-brow!'"

Because we are committed to an ideal of progress from lower economic conditions up to better, the average American looks with favour upon the efforts of the immigrant cultures to express themselves, whether in life or in literature. Instead of a conscious warfare, therefore, between the older tradition and the new importation, we have in general only an attack upon the tradition, but no defense of it. Moreover, the writers who descend from the earlier arrivals among us find much of their material in these other racial elements. Julia Peterkin and Du Bose Heyward give an importance to Negro life as such which perhaps the Negro has not yet been able to give in his own writings, and with the tolerance of the superior position, such as no Negro writer could be expected to show toward the white man. Mr. La Farge's book, *Laughing Boy*, like Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* years ago, does more for Indian culture than any Indian writer will probably do for Anglo-Saxon. The American reader accepts this phenomenon as evidence of his country's good will toward those who are improving themselves. It would be quite easy, however, perhaps inevitable, for an outsider to conclude that the older stocks are completely barren and will shortly be superseded, since they have fewer advocates, and in their portraits there is little hint of further progress.

In actual life those Americans who visit the

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Zeniths and the Gopher Prairies are inclined to attribute to the well-established citizens a richer culture than they show—assuming that they are busy exhibiting not so much their own culture as hospitality toward the culture which others bring with them. As a nation we are a reception committee for visiting—and not necessarily superior—cultures. The stranger looking for absolute results rather than for significant attitudes may conclude therefore that we have no culture at all, that the hope of our civilization rests on those racial groups which are vociferous about their ideals, and equally antagonistic to the older tradition.

The continuous arrival of new racial elements in America has deprived us of one subject matter which in an old country has always been part of the novelist's stock in trade—it has deprived us of a well-established social etiquette, which once described would be understood by all masses of the people. The American novelist can indicate certain attitudes, as we are here trying to do, but if he describes manners, he may be sure that some of his readers will misinterpret them. Some parts of our society seem casual, other parts seem too stiff, according to our different backgrounds. It was once thought that the chief mission of the novelist was to make a record of manners, but with us a conscientious picture of American manners has always been followed by a disagreement over the truth of the portrait and serious resentment on the part of those whose manners are not like what is portrayed. What one thinks of the manners of Gopher Prairie or of Zenith depends to some extent upon where one has lived, and in any case, our opinion will be less important than we think. In a civilization which is rising economically, and in which various racial elements are struggling for a foothold, manners change too fast to be important as an index of culture. Carol Milford's manners seem worse than those of the Gopher Prairie natives, but perhaps Mr. Lewis intended them to seem better. A question of that sort is hard to decide in the American novel today, and most of us agree to ignore it.

III

Since no theme is more universal than love, the American picture of lovers, of husbands and wives, must coincide on the whole with the picture given by natives of other countries. What difference there is can be explained at least in part by our conception of business as an upward progression, as an activity involving much more than economics. For example, in all literature we come on studies of restless mates; in our day especially we come on studies of women who are uneasy over their rights and privileges. In the modern novel the American woman is notorious for restlessness of this kind. Mild a person as she is, and stupid, Carol Milford illustrates the type. She represents, as she believes, traditional culture, she hopes to uplift her neighbors, presumably in the direction of that older culture, yet the old-fashioned prospect of being simply wife and mother does not interest her at all. Without realizing it she is a modern American woman. When her baby is coming, she does not feel exalted, we are told, but unkempt and furious. "Every matron hinted, 'Now that you're going to be a mother, dearie, you'll get over all these ideas of yours and settle down.' She felt that willy-nilly she was being initiated into the assembly of housekeepers; with the baby for hostage, she would never escape. . . ."

Much of her resentment against Gopher Prairie is a criticism of woman's position. She is rather hurt because she must ask her husband for money to pay the household bills. She really does not like to ask him for anything. The cause of this unwillingness she has not thought through, but it is easily traced.

When women in other parts of the world talk about equality with man, they are discussing an ideal, but when the American woman speaks of equality, she may well have

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in her consciousness the memory of something which actually happened here not so long ago. Equality between man and woman is achieved, if ever, in primitive conditions where the man brings in the food, and the skins for the family clothing, and where the woman cooks, keeps house, makes the clothes. Here is an approximate sharing of labour, a mutual dependence, with the question of sex put aside for the moment. Each works for the other in order that both may live.

Conditions as primitive as these existed on the American frontier, at all stages of that frontier, but the men and women who took part in the adventure were not primitive. They brought to the experience a civilization by which they could measure the significance of what they were temporarily living through. Though they were confident that the primitive conditions would soon be improved, yet the woman, at least, in those conditions found a kind of self-respect which could hardly be increased, and which she has not been able to recapture since.

As soon as the frontier existence had given place to a more complicated economy, the husband would get the food and the clothing, not with his rifle but with money, and the wife would get the cooking done and the clothes made, not by her own efforts, but by the work of other women whom she paid with her husband's money He was still obviously the family provider, but it was less clear to her what sort of service she was rendering. When her husband gave her money, what was he paying her for?

One class of American women tried to answer, by their conduct as well as by their words, that their contribution was housekeeping. These were the women whom Carol Milford despised. They made a fetish of small duties and insisted that these tasks could not be performed by servants, but only by the wife. They became that type of American wife which we have tried to call admirable, but which seems to observers from other lands either tragic or tyrannical, and the more prosperous the husband and the more money he provided his wife with, the busier and more embarrassing she became. She persuaded herself she was engaged in good work; perhaps she was merely fleeing from the distressing idea that whatever her husband gave her was pay for living with him. She wanted to keep the primitive woman's one privilege, to give herself without the suspicion of being bought.

Another type of woman in America has solved the problem by trying to make herself economically independent. Though her behavior is different, her motives are precisely the same as those of the avowed housewife. To interpret her activities as one more evidence that Americans like business for its own sake, or are greedy for money, is to miss the truth. No doubt there are many women in the United States who earn their living only because they have to, but they are not typical of America in any exclusive way. No doubt there are many women here as in other lands, who accept a husband in order to have someone to support them. But the woman, especially the married woman, who insists on a career for other than economic reasons, is American. She is trying to recover in our complex life the equivalent of that self-respect which the frontier woman enjoyed less than a hundred years ago. She is not running away from marriage, nor is she really less a believer in the home than is the housekeeping American wife. But since the American man now earns his economic freedom away from it, in his office, she too would like to earn her freedom far from the hearth, that she might meet her companion beside that hearth in the same mood as his—having finished the day's toil, and having come home to a companionship which is freely offered and accepted.

Babbitt's wife is the housekeeping type. Carol Milford is the freedom-seeking type. Both are essential to the American portrait. The European will probably approve of Mr. Lewis's harsh drawing of them in so far as

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he does not understand what they are trying to accomplish. The American would gladly have them portrayed more sympathetically —interpreted, rather—for the portrait is accurate enough in detail. Here more than elsewhere the difference in interpretation is important. There must be in Europe many women who hold the American woman's philosophy—the type belongs to the natural tendency, as we say, of our time. Yet in America contemporary tendencies are further developed than in Europe, and they are also modified by the peculiar conditions of our history, especially by the importance which our history has taught us to attach to the life of business.

Two recent novels by women illustrate the point—*Back Street*, by Fannie Hurst, and *Strangers May Kiss*, by Ursula Parrott. Fannie Hurst's splendid story is to the highest degree tragic. The story is of a man and woman who truly love each other, but who are not married. The woman has the greatest reluctance to be financially dependent upon the man. Such a relation would misrepresent them both. She is, however, unable to maintain herself adequately. Her very love for him interferes with her economic career. Though he is a millionaire, she lives in poverty, and after his death she starves. The story has proved profoundly moving, especially for American women readers. Their comments are illuminating. Few have anything to say about the relation in which the man and woman are living. Obviously it is a beautiful love. The tragedy seems to be the woman's inability to support herself adequately. I doubt whether Miss Hurst with all her skill could have interested the feminine readers of America in that story if the heroine had been able to earn an adequate living. That matter once attended to, she could have done with her life as she wished, so far as the readers are concerned. Ursula Parrott's book, on the other hand, shifts the tragedy over to the love itself. It is a story of a man who is free to marry, and of a woman who is economically independent. The tragedy is that he did not know his real happiness until it was too late. The woman loved him always, but was too proud to ask him to marry her before he was ready to offer it. Both books accept the American scene as completely as Mr. Lewis, but they also accept, as he does not, the American philosophy. It is not by accident that the popular taste at the moment is for western stories, pictures of that frontier life which I have referred to. Nor is it by accident that some of the older novelists who glorify the really beautiful home life of the middle nineteenth century are somewhat frowned upon. Though the American reader still sees the beauty of that home life, he begins to resent the insistence upon an elaborate ritual of domesticity. He is cheerfully resigned to the news that the old-fashioned home is disintegrating. What truly makes a home, he feels, will not disintegrate, but he doesn't want his wife to fritter away her time and his in little busynesses, in order to impress him with the fact that she is independent.

IV

If what I have said here about the backgrounds of the American novel is correct, there is little hope that Europe will for a long time understand us, or that all of us will understand ourselves the same way. The themes which American novelists must make use of seem to be identical with European themes, but they are not. And because we are, in some corner of our brains, all children of Europe, some of us try to deal with America as though it were not, for better or worse, in the Western Hemisphere. Dickens once wrote about the Middle West; so did Mark Twain. The American missed none of the sordidness of small town life—the Englishman missed what was, in this instance, its significance. Why should we expect another result?

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THE THOREAU "COUNTRY"

by Robert Whitcomb

ORDINARILY I do not care where Washington slept or where Sam Johnson ate cheese, but Thoreau was the only god of my late adolescence, and during that period I could quite unashamedly thrill at the sight of his birthplace. It is sad that what remains in my memory is not the thrill, but the disappointment of the modern reality. So must it be, I daresay, even with the Acropolis.

I came in sight of Concord, on foot, walking in the Thoreau spirit, but against his advice I was walking on the highway, and the highway was concrete. This was the hill down which Paul Revere charged on his horse from Lexington. The jays and chewinks were calling into the early summer, and in front of a new sham Colonial house stood a shiny new Ford.

The day before I had been in the turmoil of New York City; now I was standing in the shade of those graceful elms which drew Emerson out of Boston. This was the peaceful little Revolutionary village where the shot heard 'round the world was fired and where later the Transcendentalists formed America's first literary center. Or was it the first? Margaret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne, the Alcotts, John Brown, Daniel Webster—you know the feeling. And the birthplace of Thoreau, the only one of all the famous ones who was born and bred on Concord soil. Perhaps that was why he loved it so much that he scarcely ever left it.

But this was *a priori*. Concord is superficially the same beautiful collection of snowy frame houses and green shade trees, but the undertone betrays the fact that it is a commuting suburb of Boston. That undertone consists of traffic policemen, automobiles, gasoline stations, real estate dealers, Greek restaurants, and politics and gossip which seem to have little to do with the old Concord of "plain living and high thinking". Since Concord became one of the American "shrines" it has been constantly trampled under by tourists, sightseeing buses, disciples and fans. I would not be surprised if the pestered souls who own property there also own shotguns.

As I was walking along a side street I saw a printer's shop, and stepped in. A typical printer, red nose, mouth full of tobacco, looked up from a dusty case of type, spat, and said, "Well, what're you doin', hikin'?"

"Yes," I said, "I came to Concord to meet Mr. Thoreau."

He thought a moment, rolling his eyes over his glasses and looking toward the ceiling, spat, and turned to another man in the rear. "Hey, George", he said, "we got anyone around here named Thoreau?"

I said, "Oh, no, the man I'm looking for died sixty-five years ago".

He spat again, and his face lighted up. "Oh, I know who you mean," he said. "Why that was the feller who wouldn't pay his taxes and stole all his food from James Greenleaf

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Emerson!" I will not swear he said James Greenleaf, but I remember he mixed up Emerson's name.

Concord has no hero. Everybody present is equally heroic by force of residing on that hallowed ground. I went to the house where Thoreau died. A Yankee woman servant, on learning I had no appointment with the owner, literally closed the door in my face.

I heard of two people living who had known Thoreau when they were children, and set out in search of one, Miss Abby Prescott Hosmer. The Hosmers of Concord are descendants of an original Minute Man. I found one of the family hoeing in his garden.

"Thoreau, Thoreau?" he said, as conservatively as he could. "I never had much use for that loafer—a man who wouldn't pay his taxes!" The rest of it was expressed in terms of reticent hoeing. He wouldn't commit himself further.

But I did not have so much interest in the center of Concord itself. The most I could say of it, as a Thorellian, was that so far they had not started any apartment houses. I ran across Thoreau's telescope and part of his original journal in the Concord Library, but the fact that he had made the telescope with his own hands, and the sight of his scrawly schoolboy writing lost their appeal when I saw them carefully under lock and key in glass cases. A corner druggist had some pathetic cedar pencils marked "John Thoreau and Son", and they were for sale, although he said they were not.

As I walked past the outskirts of the village the twilight thrushes sang, and I had a feeling of being drawn into the past. It seemed possible that I might meet the poet-naturalist in the dark, coming into town to have his shoes cobbled. But this feeling was very fragmentary. How otherwise, when the road was brightened with electric lights—as all macadamized State roads should be, of course! On one bend I came upon several parked cars, occupied and with lights dimmed.

So this was the road to Walden Pond! . . . A smell came to my nostrils, suggesting that of a skunk. My sense of smell is dull. There is something pleasant, something of the genuine wild, in the musk of the skunk, providing the distance is right. Rapidly this smell lost its resemblance to that of a skunk, and soon I walked by a garbage dump.

"You Are Now Entering the Walden Pond State Reservation"—a sign for motorists. I waited for several cars to pass so that I might read the sign by their headlights. I started to walk again, and came upon two apparitions. In the dark, when I was between two road lights and when cars were not passing, I could stretch my imagination to believe that this was the wild spot where Thoreau came to test life out. But at the entrance to the pond property this feeling was shattered. Along the road, brightly lighted and noisy with radios, were two hot-dog stands.

One road stand was titled, "Walden Breezes". The other was, quite simply, "Jerry's Place". The latter served hot dogs doctored in the most modern collegiate style, luscious frankfurters on which are showered mustard, chile, sauerkraut and sweet pickle. The proprietor of "Walden Breezes", by the name of the place, I thought, would be of a more poetic temperament than Jerry. I found him a burly, healthily complexioned Canadian, simple to talk to. He had been a woodsman in Canada. He knew a little about Thoreau, probably more than Jerry.

But the State had preserved a vestige of the original pond before everything went to hot dogs and garbage. I found the entrance to a wood road and started down a steep incline through the black night. The forest closed about me, and I walked in darkness until I saw a star shining above my head; then I discerned the outlines of trees and saw I was in a grove of majestic white pines. I cast about in the dark for the cairn of stones marking the site of Thoreau's cabin, and although I knew from descriptions just about where the cabin must have been, I could not find it.

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This was off the road. I stood on the shore of Walden, under the pines, and the place seemed obscurely familiar. It was a tense moment, when I expected to hear the laugh of a loon or the melancholy hoot of a great horned owl. A whippoorwill did call plaintively across the water. This was indeed, after all, the place where Thoreau came and studied Walden and himself. "Thank God they can't cut down the clouds", and that they left this much of the pond.

I readily guessed that camping was not permitted on the reservation, but I decided to chance it, in the interests of science, without a fire. I spread a blanket and lay down—on something hard. I reached under and pulled up from the mass of pine needles an empty ginger ale bottle. As I went to sleep I heard a train go by, the Fitchburg Railroad, now a gasolinized, commuterized branch of the Boston and Maine. An airplane light from far off reflected itself rhythmically on the under side of the dark clouds—an aspect of Walden unknown to Thoreau.

I awoke in rain. It was cold and still night. I packed and started walking to keep warm. It did not matter so much what happened to Walden now. I had come close enough to Thoreau for my purposes. Later, when I visited his grave, near Emerson's pink quartz boulder in Concord's Sleepy Hollow cemetery, Thoreau did not seem to be buried there, although there was a small marker for him, among the members of his family.

I found a bed in the State Police bungalow up the State road. When morning came the cook had breakfast waiting, and after it he introduced me to the manager-in-charge of the Walden Pond State Reservation. The latter was engaged in piecing together a bright-red Indian motorcycle. He was chesty and kindly, explaining that the reservation contained eighty-four acres, the pond occupying two-thirds of that. It was his ambition to clean up the pond and make it presentable for the thousands of visitors, most of them local people, who came to the pond to swim and eat sandwiches. In fact, I met a young married pair, both college graduates, who had regularly used Walden for a swimming hole. Neither of them had ever heard the name Thoreau. There is a large public bathing pavilion across the pond from where Thoreau lived, and soda pop is for sale.

Posted on trees all over the reservation were cloth markers which appealed to me as a rhetorical classicism. They read in part as follows:

. . . it being the sole and exclusive purpose of the conveyors to aid the Commonwealth in preserving the Walden of Emerson and Thoreau. . . .

Rule 1. No part of the premises shall be used for games, athletic contests, racing, baseball, football, motion pictures, dancing, camping, hunting, trapping, shooting, making fires, shows and other amusements. . . .

Rule 2. No person shall dig up, cut, break, remove, deface, defile, or ill-use any building, structure, fence, sign, bush, plant, turf, rock or other thing herein, belonging to the State or County. . . .

Rule 4. No person shall annoy another person; or utter any profane, threatening, abusive or indecent language or loud outcry; or solicit any subscription or contribution; or have possession of or drink any intoxicating liquor; or play any game of chance; or do any obscene or indecent act; or preach or pray aloud. . . .

I asked for one of these posters with the idea that its fine moral code would be an example to my children, and I intend to make a wall motto of it some day.

Yea, the solitude long ago departed from Walden to join Thoreau. The world has worn a path to his door—a concrete path. I found the cairn, a pile of rocks formed by visitors. I was informed that at first visitors each left a stone to the pile, but later visitors started the custom of taking one home. Baffled, I neither put one on nor took one off.

Around the sandy walled edge of Walden the white violets grew. I disturbed a pair of black snakes making love, and pursued them for a few feet, observing that their tails

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shook, like rattlesnakes', though silently. I saw an ovenbird solemnly walking along a track in the loam made by a Goodrich Ford tire. A chickadee sang its sweet double-syllabled spring note. A scarlet tanager perched on a scarlet sumach, a glimpse of the tropics, for a lightning instant transforming Walden to Victoria Nyanza. A black duck flew from under my feet, and I observed the nest with its round dozen hazy green eggs. As you see, this was no Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, and I had the inhabitants of the pond comparatively to myself. Somehow, however, it was distasteful to remain longer, and I walked back to the "center" and a few more disappointments.

The Antiquarian Society, containing some of the furnishings of Thoreau's cabin, was closed, but wandering about I met a poet. He was taken with me, and offered to introduce me to a man who knew Thoreau. The latter was Mr. Pierce, the shoe merchant, still selling shoes in the store run by his father when Thoreau lived at Walden.

"Thoreau?" he said. "Yes, I remember him. We boys liked to run up to him and ask questions about animals and fishes. He was a queer kind of a duck. Always used to wear a gray shirt and tramp through the woods every day."

The poet and I wandered about Concord for the rest of the afternoon, along the Concord River, the Musketaquid, where Thoreau and his brother set off for their week on the Concord and Merrimac rivers. The poet told me he had met a farmer along the Thoreaus's route who still remembered when the boys camped on his property. We listened to the chorus of frogs and toads in the marsh along the river, and observed the trees hiding themselves in a fine mist. It was beautiful.

Then we walked out on the Virginia Road to the house in which Thoreau was born. We had been told that the owner was hard to approach, but James Breen was an amiable enough man, a widower, living alone with his son and still working the farm belonging to the house. Probably because of the poet's connections in Concord, Mr. Breen showed us every board and beam and hand-made nail in the place. Curiosity seekers did not get here often. Some antique dealer had been through and bought a section of the hand-made staircase. A staircase of his own making suited Mr. Breen just as well. Financial conditions were not so good just now.

Concord, of course, is a shrine because the Revolution was supposed to have started there. Only incidentally was it the home of Louisa May Alcott, whose house is fitted up as a museum—twenty-five cents admission. Emerson's house is closed to the public. But there are dozens of historical places, and not the least of these is Thoreau's birthplace. It strikes me that here is a good business proposition going to waste. With a few provocative signs directing tourists to the Virginia Road, people would come out and pay admission.

Also I think that perhaps the house in which Thoreau was born might be a good investment for the State, or for some enterprising Henry Ford. Thoreau's reputation is growing with the years, and in the end the effect of his life and works upon the history of America may not be so inconsiderable. Unless someone has done so since I was there, the birthplace of Thoreau is being used still as a farmhouse. Perhaps that is what Thoreau himself would have preferred.

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THE WORD

by David Morton

"Let there be light" . . . and lo, the heavens woke
To a wide, virginal radiance. . . . "Let there be —"
And I am wondering, now, what word he spoke
Into that stillness, that became a tree.
A proud word and a tall one, it would seem,
With something of the summer's happy sound,
And something of the winter's lonely dream
Of stricken treasures scattered on the ground.

Tender . . . and gay . . . and beautiful . . . and stark,
A sound for empty branches—and for birds;
And something . . . something for the solemn, dark
Foreboding of this word among all words,
Some far-off sadness, brooding and grave and still,
For a dark road up-raised upon a hill.

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EDMUND GOSSE

by John Drinkwater

WHEN Edmund Gosse died in 1928, in his eightieth year, he had troops of friends. Nine years earlier, on his seventieth birthday, two hundred of them had united to pay him homage. On that occasion Mr. Balfour, as he then was, addressing an assembly that under Lord Crewe's presidency was representative of English literature, art, and public life, said: "Mr. Gosse has a double claim on our regard . . . the claim of friendship . . . and the wider claim to public admiration". They were simple words, but they met the case. Gosse was, indeed, being honoured in this dual sense; by his friends, who gradated in age from Thomas Hardy, born in 1840, to Robert Graves, born in 1895, as a man peculiarly fitted to inspire a public celebration of friendship; and by the profession of letters as a writer who for more than half a century had devoted himself with high and steady distinction to their calling. In the nine years that remained to him Gosse fell into no decline of intellectual energy or social zest, and he died in a private and public esteem even more firmly fixed than it had been when, in acknowledging the tribute of 1919, he had written: "I pore over your warm words and re-study the list of admired and beloved names, until I ask myself Can all this indulgence and affection possibly be meant for *me*?"

It is certain, then, that no biography of our time can have been awaited with greater personal interest, or a more critical solicitude, than Mr. Charteris's *Life*.* A considerable proportion of the living men and women who in Great Britain have established their names in the literature of their time were themselves on intimate terms with Gosse; and so Mr. Charteris has had to submit his work to the scrutiny of opinion in many cases at once expert in the craft of literary presentation and as well informed on the immediate subject as he. He has survived this searching ordeal with entire credit. In the chorus of praise with which his work has been welcomed, there seems to have been no discordant voice. He has satisfied obligations of the most delicate kind with a tact and unforced skill that would have delighted Gosse himself. An insensitive or inadequate memoir of this eager, complex and, in many respects, elusive personality would have been something of a disaster to the annals of an age, and there is no one among Gosse's friends but must rejoice with Mr. Charteris in his triumph, for it is no less.

With so great a mass of material at his disposal, Mr. Charteris must have experienced much anxiety in considering the design of his book. He decided on a method that was simple and lucid. Simple, that is to say, in effect; its employment needed rare discrimination. Gosse was an inveterate letter-writer,

* *The Life and Letters of Sir Edmund Gosse*, by the Hon. Evan Charteris, K. C. (London; Heinemann. New York; Harpers. July, 1931.)

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and his biographer, with notable self-restraint, has allowed him for the most part to tell his own story through his correspondence —though correspondence is here an inexact term, since while we have a generous harvest of letters written by Gosse, we have, apart from a few early family documents, none written to him. It must not be inferred that Mr. Charteris has been over-prudent in his responsibilities. Within his chosen design, he has supplied all the exposition that was necessary. Particularly in his account of Gosse's childhood and early years, before the letters make much beyond domestic contacts, he shows how readily and shrewdly he can answer any calls upon his own observation and sympathy. One slight note will indicate the extraordinary alertness of his perceptions. Speaking of Gosse at the outset of his career, he says: "his movements were quick, and he trod lightly, with his weight on the forward part of his feet. This resulted in a gait curiously suggestive at once of eagerness and caution". That is perfectly seen, and it was as true of Gosse at seventy as it was at twenty.

As time goes on, however, and Gosse's life becomes enriched in all directions, Mr. Charteris leaves him more and more to himself. The method is wholly justified in its results, but it is one that emphasizes a feature of biographical writing that must perplex everyone who undertakes it. When all has been said that is possible within reasonable proportion, there remains as much, indeed more, of no less significance unsaid. Mr. Charteris has given us a convincing portrait of Gosse, even, it may be allowed, a sufficient portrait. No one can fail to recognize its truth, its charm, and its insight. And yet, among the friends who will regard it with unreserved satisfaction, there will inevitably be many who will recall other aspects of the familiar figure, and circumstances that enliven or elaborate the aspect here given. These will be tempted to amplify a record in which there is nothing to correct. They will add footnotes of their own to Mr. Charteris's admirable pages, as two or three of them have already done.

II

In 1909 I sent Gosse an early book of my verse. It received a civil little note of acknowledgement, which was as much as it deserved. It was not until 1913 that the acquaintance began to ripen into a friendship that Gosse invested with generosity until the time of his death. In that year I sent him a book I had written on Swinburne. Although I was then thirty, I had begun late as a writer, and was still painfully immature. The most that could be claimed for the study was enthusiasm and a certain interest as displaying the fumblings of a mind that with a most precarious education was yet absorbed in the nature and tentative practice of poetry. I had only recently come to know anybody who knew anything, and I certainly then could scarcely pretend to know Gosse—though no doubt I pretended it. Further, it was more than commonly brazen to ask his attention for a neophytic book on a subject that was pre-eminently his own. I could not have complained had I been advised politely to keep off the grass. To my astonishment I was told: "it is the soundest and sweetest estimate of this poet that has yet been published". But that was not all. There followed in the *Morning Post* a signed review that was handsome without reserve. It was the kind of thing that a young writer never forgets. Thereafter I saw Gosse at frequent intervals, and I have been refreshing my memories of him by rereading some hundred and forty letters, the last of which he wrote in the year before his death. The following notes are taken from these in chronological order.

When writing the Swinburne book, I had been to see Watts-Dunton, who was not only helpful to me, but spoke of Gosse in terms that seemed to belie the rumours of an antagonism that are confirmed by Mr. Charteris. On April 8, 1913, Gosse wrote:

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What you tell me as to Mr. Watts-Dunton's communication with you is most agreeable to me to hear. . . . What you so amiably repeat is the first sign of a return to friendly relations, which (now I know of it) I shall hope to be able to cultivate, for I desire nothing less than to be at enmity with the poor old man.

Nothing seems to have come of it, but Mr. Charteris's remark that "it was the rarest thing for him to miss a chance of reconciliation" has here a note of confirmation. In June of the same year:

Here is the picture. It looks to me like a German fiddler in the orchestra of a second-rate theatre! But we are as God and the artists make us.

In 1913 Lascelles Abercrombie, Rupert Brooke, Wilfrid Gibson and I began the publication of *New Numbers*, a quarterly containing our new poems.

21.12.13

. . . I subscribed for two copies of your *Poems by Four*, with a foolish letter to the four of you which (with the cruel candour of the young!) you left unacknowledged! The Poet Laureate has been staying here with us on a little visit. We talked of you, and read some of your poems together.

13.5.14

. . . this morning arrives *Noble Numbers 2*, with your very beautiful poem *Love's House*. How ingenious and amusing is Rupert Brooke's fish-hymn. I watch you all, silhouetted against the sunrise, from my frog-hole down below.

Mr. Charteris gives a charming account of the lifelong ceremony that Gosse made of his hospitality. For many years it was his custom to give a little Christmas dinner at his club to the Prime Minister in office. His guests for the occasion were chosen to a fixed design. There must be one or two of the Minister's personal friends, one or two University professors, some junior member of the House to whom this chance of personal contact with his leader would be valuable, a young diplomat or so, and a young writer with a career to encourage—not more than eight or ten in all.

3.11.15

First and foremost—the Prime Minister (with whom I dined last night) fixes Thursday Dec. 9 for his annual dinner with me. So please enter that date with a diamond pencil. . . .

I remember that the dinner was an hour late, Mr. Asquith being detained by a critical debate. Among the other guests were Walter Raleigh, C. J. Grierson, and Robert Vansittart, then better known as a poet than as a diplomat. I was exceedingly embarrassed, and no less thrilled, when Gosse told me that I was to sit next to the P.M. at table. It was graciously apparent that the others were used to sitting next to a P.M., and so now it was my turn. I was deeply impressed by Mr. Asquith's capacity for momentarily discarding the burden of Europe that he then had on his shoulders. He talked about Gladstone and Horatio Bottomley and poetry. We agreed to decide independently which was the best lyric in the language, and found that we had both chosen *Fear No More the Heat o' the Sun*.

A remarkable letter written by Gosse to me on Rupert Brooke's death, recounting a dream, has been printed by Mr. Charteris, but some months later (3.11.15) he wrote:

I shall look forward very eagerly to your article on Rupert. It is desirable that his friends should record the truth, because already one of those odious "legends" which British sentimentality is always ready to form is being wound about his name. A little more and those who really loved and comprehended him will be elbowed out of court by those who never saw him or contemplated his real nature. Have you seen Eddie's Memoir? I think it admirable, almost superlatively admirable.

28.12.15

You are forbidden to send me a free copy of your Essay on Rupert Brooke. You will want every one of the 115. On the other hand, I hope you will be able to spare me the 2 copies I am hereby ordering.

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I was relieved when the essay met with approval.

III

I was able to arrange for an exhibition of Sylvia Gosse's drawings at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, and my admiration for them seems to have found occasion also at a London show:

27.3.16

. . . We hear that at Carfax this last week while the Duchess of Marlborough was unable to make up her mind between two of Sylvia's drawings, a gentleman elegantly forced her to decide by promptly buying one of her favourites. She bought the other at once, lest worse things should happen to her. The gentleman gave a name much beloved in this house.

Gosse's encouragement was no matter of easy compliment. His praise though generous was critical, but he remembered his objections and was eager to note improvement. "I think you want to study the value of *words* a little more . . . some words you use (and all the other young poets too) as mere counters", he wrote in a letter of 1915 quoted by Mr. Charteris. This enhanced the welcome given to a new book two years later: "I find in it the only thing your poetry seemed to lack, a full sense of the preciousness of words —of the exact unhackneyed phrase. You are beautifully extending your vocabulary". But his interest would sometimes go beyond praise altogether. The following speaks for itself:

27.10.16

My dear John,

The Macmillans are proposing to issue a 5th volume of their great anthology *The English Poets*, dealing with poets who have died since 1880. The critical notices will be written, as before, by a variety of people, and already T. Hardy, Bridges, myself and other seniors are pledged. But I think it very important that your generation also should come in, and I have urged the editor, Mr. T. Humphry Ward, to apply to you and Masefield. It is an enterprise with which it will do you good to be identified, for remember that you will be a fellow-contributor with Matthew Arnold, Swinburne and Pater, all of whom wrote for the earlier volumes. So, if Mr. Ward writes to you, answer him with amenity and agreement. Remember, it is a little army, where every one must take the particular post assigned to him.

Ever yours

EDMUND GOSSE.

While I was engaged on this work, Gosse was solicitous in his help, lending me books, sending me references, and supplying me with likely scraps of information about my poets. It was all done with unfailing tact, in affectionate care that his protégé should do him credit. I think Wilde must have been one of the poets originally allotted to me— Mr. Charteris prints a letter from Gosse to Dr. Sim regretting his ultimate omission. I find in a postcard, "How *stupid* about Wilde. The foolishness of Ward hath often left me weeping".

At this time, too, Gosse proposed me for a fellowship of the Royal Society of Literature. He took the affairs of that body very seriously, and was constant in his attendance at its Councils. With two or three other distinguished men of letters, he exerted himself, with a considerable measure of success, to restore it to the dignity and importance from which it has fallen after its early years when Coleridge and Malthus had been among its Professors. Election had become too easy, and the fellowship roll in later times had been silted up with nonentities. It is largely due to Gosse's vigilance that today admission has once more become an honour. He conveyed the pleasant news of my own at a time when I had been suffering from a succession of illnesses, and this is how he did it:

Jan. 19. '17

. . . Now I must hurry to another subject. The election to the R. S. of L. being once completed (it has to be made) I insist on being allowed to pay the original £5. With all the expenses of your illness, it would never do to add this to them. When the time comes, I shall send you

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the little sum, which you shall pass on in your own cheque to the Secretary, and it shall be a secret for ever between you and me.

Since I can no longer share the secret with him, he would absolve me for divulging a kindness so characteristic and so characteristically done. It was by his influence, too, that in 1919 I was elected to the Academic Committee. "I congratulate you. You are by a good many years our youngest Academician."

IV

"It would be an error", says Mr. Charteris, "to suppose that friendship with Gosse was always plain sailing." No mind can ever have been more eager for wide contacts, and none more sensitive to the impressions that they made. A crowd of people in a room was not a crowd for him, but a number of individuals each one of whom was making an impact, friendly or antagonistic, upon his consciousness. Similarly, his closest friend could never afford to rest on the oars of intimacy. Gosse, splendidly loyal and generous in friendship, was exacting as to its obligations, its behaviour. Mr. Charteris, again, puts it precisely: "Giving so lavishly himself and importing into friendship such vehement activity of spirit, he was easily checked and far too ready to fancy slights". However well-tried a friendship might be, the smallest negligence or discord would be noted, and probably challenged. "He was incapable of letting things slide, or of chancing the probability that they would right themselves." Fluctuations of temperature could even be indicated by forms of address; a brief correspondence might register its mood thus—"My dear John", "My dear Drinkwater", "Dear Drinkwater", "My dear John".

I appear to have misbehaved myself only four times in twenty years. Two of the occasions, both of the same nature, made rather heavy going for a moment. Mr. Charteris, with a full sense of Gosse's unique gifts as an expositor, adds: "but he was not a fearless critic. . . . His business was to call attention to the idols, and much more rarely to idols in the making". This must not be misunderstood. Gosse could be, and frequently was, liberal in his encouragement of young reputations, and until the end it was his constant anxiety not to grow insensitive to new voices. But he was shy of any talent that for some reason or another had made itself definitely unpopular. "He would", says Mr. Charteris, "never have been *contra mundum* from his 'pulpit'." My two squalls with him had their origins in my association with two such writers, once in the dedication of a book, and once as chairman at a public dinner. "But I see on your fly-leaf, as your dedicatee, the name of a man whose existence is horrible to me. How *can* you? Forgive this tiresome lecture, but really . . .", and so on. I explained that I valued his friendship to the point of idolatry, to any point in fact short of allowing it to determine who my other friends were to be. At once he responded with all his rich magnanimity.

19.4.17

My dear John [the former letter had been Drinkwater],

It is impossible for me to regret having called forth from you the beautiful and even memorable letter which I have received this morning. I feel it a privilege to see the workings of your mind and conscience. . . .

I am always

Yours affectionately [superseding Yours sincerely]

EDMUND GOSSE.

On the other occasion I was less successful in persuading him, though not in recovering his good graces.

Twice I provoked him on trifling matters, one merely humorous. In the bottom drawer of a bureau in his Hanover Terrace study, he kept a little store of bibliophilic treasures, and a visit was commonly celebrated by a gift from these. I find among my books such cherished souvenirs as his own rare edition of *Love's Graduate* and his early pamphlet on

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Swinburne, the manuscript of his essay on Lord Redesdale, Blaikie's own copy of *Madrigals, Songs and Sonnets*, by John Arthur Blaikie and Edmund William Gosse, published in 1870, and a first edition of Maria Rossetti's *Shadow of Dante*, all of them gracefully inscribed. Sometimes they would come by post.

3.11.15

. . . For some time past I have been keeping for you a copy of the first edition of Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market*. I may as well send it now. I think it one of the very most attractive *editiones principes* of the Victorian age, and it is getting rare.

But once a present came without the inscription, and I was bold to say that it was incomplete, with this result:

21.11.17

. . . I received the *Letters of Charlotte Brontë*. You have got into the habit of always sending back any little book one sends you. [I had certainly never done so before.] You should break yourself of this disconcerting way. It vexes the donor, and needlessly gives him the trouble of a second package and the expense of a second postage. I shall keep the Brontë *Letters* by me until I have some other package to send you.

The other minor engagement took place as late as 1926, when I was dining one evening alone with Gosse at his house. There had been some misunderstanding between him and a friend who was an even closer friend of mine. I had promised to use such diplomacy as I possessed to see whether the difference could be composed. At what seemed a suitable moment I made a tentative approach. I was abashed by what was little less than an explosion—a vehemence, indeed, such as I had never known Gosse to display before. I knew he was being unreasonable, partly on account of misinformation, and I stuck to my point. But he would have none of it. With a humble submission that he was wrong, I had to let the question drop. The next day he wrote:

27.11.17

. . . As I lay in bed I thought penitently of the exaggerated way in which I had been led to complain of ——. You must please forget all about it. There was something very ungenerous in my splenetic outburst. I am sure the poor man has worries enough to account for anything, and, after all, the world is wide enough to hold us both.

V

At the end of 1917, I was sent on an odd and quite unheroic expedition to France. "I think it an excellent thing that you have undertaken it. . . . You must be sure to dress *warmly*: the cold in the north of France can be intense. . . . You are, I am quite sure, deepening and widening, in many ways, your impress on your generation, and this humane episode in France will further extend it." In the following year I was contemplating my first visit to Thomas Hardy:

15.3.18

. . . I am truly glad that you are going to see T. Hardy. I shall write to him about you. Be sure and give him my love. I have been writing for the April No: of the *Edinburgh Review* a very long article—a regular analysis—of Hardy's lyrical poetry. I am very anxious to show it to you. I should rather like you to find out whether he would prefer—in due time—to see it *or not*. He is very odd in these respects. He knows it is being written.

After the visit, came this comforting assurance:

14.4.18

You will be interested to know that I hear, through neighbours of Hardy, that your visit gave him great pleasure. He hurried in to them to tell them what you had said, and what you looked like, and how much he had liked you.

Praise from Gosse was a tonic, but those of us who enjoyed it knew how to guard ourselves against the dangers of self-esteem. It is true that he once said that like Washington he could not tell a lie, at least where literature was concerned, and Mr. Guedalla

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got himself into trouble for saying that he would be proud if he could believe half that Gosse had written in a review. "I always mean exactly the whole of what I write. I believe that you expressed yourself in haste, and not with a wish to wound me." This was no more than serious jesting, but there is a hint of significance behind it. Mr. Charteris quotes Gosse as observing of Lord Acton, who absurdly used Sophocles, Cervantes and Dante as a pedestal for George Eliot, "It is very dangerous to write like that", and then adds, "It was one of his [Gosse's] merits that he never did write like that". It is true; but he had a way, not in print, but in his letters, of pitching his approval very high on the scale of enthusiasm. In the letters printed by Mr. Charteris, we find him writing to Browning as one whose name "I reverence as the highest of living names": to Stevenson as "the best essayist since Lamb": to Swinburne that "no second light has arisen in 27 years that has been to me what the lamp of your great passion for poetry has been": to Hardy as "the man whom of all my living contemporaries I admire and delight in the most": to Pinero as being "to the reign of Edward VII what Farquhar is to Queen Anne, and more too": to Compton Mackenzie as the author of "far and away the best account of University life that ever was written": to J. C. Squire that "the young prose of today is uniformly bad, except yours": to Siegfried Sassoon that a new work is "full of the peculiar force in which you are alone in your generation": and to Lytton Strachey, "You are the best writer living under fifty". Discovering Saint-Simon, he exclaims at the age of sixty-eight, "Surely this book is more thrilling than any other in the world. Everything pales beside it".

There is in none of these instances any question of insincerity. It merely was that when Gosse was liking a thing very much he was apt at the moment to like it to the exclusion of everything else, an amiable weakness at worst. And always it must be remembered that he was really incapable of liking anything that was tawdry or spurious. In certain cases, where his acute personal sensibility had in some way been jarred, he was apt to disregard meritable living writers altogether, but personal esteem could never secure his approval of poor work. Perhaps it would state the case more exactly to say that poor writing put his personal esteem out of the question. If, in praising work that he admired, he allowed personal esteem to wing his words with an extra feather or two, no harm was done and much innocent pleasure given. The integrity was unspoilt by the touch of extravagance. To be praised by Gosse was, as I said, a tonic, and it set you up. But a recognition of its nature saved you from saying too complacently "What a fine fellow am I".

VI

I wait, till, down the eastern sky,
  Muses, like Mænads in a throng,
Sweep my decayed traditions by,
  In startling tones of unknown song.

So to my day's extremity,
  May I, in patience infinite,
Attend the beauty that must be,
  And, though it slay me, welcome it.

The complaint and the resolution were equally candid. His mind was, in fact, receptive till the end, but he experienced moods of genuine if serene exhaustion. In 1926 he wrote to Mr. Squire, "You are the last poet I shall ever admire. I have come to the end of my tether, and the younger bards bore me to extinction". He was then seventy-seven, but already in 1918 I find a letter:

. . . How are you, and what are you doing? I hear very little, except that new poets spring up on every side, Pindars in shoals, troops of Heines, beds of the spawn of Yeats—it is really dreadful. I shudder at the sight of the slender and elegant volumes of verse, all so clever and all so alike and all so empty. I think a law might be passed forbidding the publication of the work of any new poet. The bard shld. be made to give an affidavit that he had published

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something in book-form before (say) 1916. If he couldn't produce it—silence!

Boredom and disillusion were, however, experiences of which, in fact, Gosse knew nothing. The pretense that he was discarded, out of tune with the times, neglected, was a humour on which he played with a sly and gentle irony, no more. Mr. Charteris tells us how Mr. Shaw, walking away with him from the Abbey after Hardy's funeral, at which they had both been pall-bearers, spoke with enthusiasm of *Father and Son*. "Oh, my dear Shaw," said Gosse, "you are the *only* one who ever encourages me." Mr. Shaw, it seems, was very becomingly taken in—"I was greatly pleased by this".

When the fancy was on him, he would speak to me of himself as "Your poor old Uncle". I had, perhaps, made an early Sunday afternoon arrival at Hanover Terrace. On his desk would be half a dozen books newly received from friendly or solicitous authors, a sheaf of invitations, assurances of European regard; and presently, one knew, up the stairs would come the discreetly marshalled procession of poets, diplomats, and personages, to pay court. But the talk took no account of these. "My dear John—how kind you are to your poor old Uncle. Nobody else takes any notice of him. You are too indulgent—but he knows the truth—we must face it. You will wake one morning to read a notice in your *Times*, 'We regret to announce the death of Mr. Edward Goose, a minor novelist of the Victorian era'."

Two of the best letters I received from Gosse were written in 1919 and 1923, after he had seen my plays *Abraham Lincoln* and *Robert E. Lee*. I wish I could print them here, since they reveal him perfectly as a playgoer, a friend, and a stylist. But this is a point at which modesty does forbid. Two other occasions of his interest supply my last gleanings from his letters. In 1922, at a time when I was deeply perplexed by a grave personal problem, he wrote:

19.2.22

My dear John,

Ever since I saw you at the Savile for a moment, I have been harassed by a solicitude and I have hoped to hear from you and have your confidence. I gathered from your hurried words that you had some particular trouble or anxiety, which I was very hopeful to share and perhaps to alleviate. But I have heard no more, and now I am going away. . . . It makes me uneasy, and I regret that you have not come, as you always should, and told me the whole particulars. . . .

And then:

July 5, '22

My dear John,

Your little note makes me sad and anxious. But keep your heart up—all will be well. Come to me if I can be of the slightest use to you. . . .

That was an aspect of Gosse that even his friends seldom saw, but it was constant in his nature.

Mr. Charteris's readers will know about Parker, the maid at Hanover Terrace, who has a delightful page in his book, and Caruso the cat.

2.6.22

. . . The little photographs are charming. Parker is enchanted with the picture of herself waving an immense Caruso before the Lord.

And, in conclusion, concerning Paddy, a tortoise-shell kitten:

27.5.26

My dear John,

We were not expecting you to send for Paddy quite so soon, and all my ladies are out. However, Parker thinks she is quite ready to leave us, being 6 weeks old tomorrow. She has been trained quite correctly. Only, about food, she will want a little care at first. I do hope you will like her, she is not quite so strong as her brother Sandiman (who has found a kind home with the Guedallas) but she is healthy and amiable.

With warmest greetings to you both,

I am ever yours

EDMUND GOSSE.

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VII

Gosse neither had nor pretended to have any clear-cut philosophic views about life. His intelligence was quick to every subtlety of men and books, and he was almost infallible in recording the impressions received. He loved poetry and the company of poets, and cared little for points of view. He was the appreciative friend of many political leaders in all parties, but I never heard him express the smallest interest in party politics, nor does any appear in Mr. Charteris's book. In a letter to Stevenson (1886), there is a confession remarkable in its self-knowledge:

> I do not know how it is that you and so many others . . . have a gift entirely denied to me, the gift of thought. If I can be said to think at all, it is flashingly, along the tip of the tongue or the pen; and when I hear people talk of a sustained exercise of thought, it is of a thing unknown to me. We learn to be very hypocritical about the attitude of our minds. If I am strenuously honest . . . when I am not working my mind is absolutely idle.

One of the consequences was that while he was instantly critical of any defect in personality, behaviour, or style, he had small if any concern for abstract principles, and he indulged no moral indignations at large. In his contacts with his friends and literature he might know many anxieties, but when these were at rest it needed some very violent convulsion from the world without to disturb his composure. In these conditions, one aspect of his character becomes, in his own words already quoted, "almost superlatively admirable". Mr. Charteris supplements in a most interesting way the picture of Gosse's early life already famous in *Father and Son*. When Edmund was eighteen, he wrote a poem on Hope, which his father sent to a nonconformist editor asking him to print it. It did not appear. "I had asked the Lord much," Edmund was told, "that if it were according to His will it might be inserted, but it is plainly not His Mind, and we must submit." Many years later, in 1908, Gosse wrote to Lord Knutsford that his central intention in writing *Father and Son* had been to expose "the modern sentimentality which thinks it can parade all the prettiness of religion without really resigning its will and its thought to faith. You have most excellently said it is either my father's creed or nothing". In the same letter he adds: "the old faith is now impossible to sincere and intelligent minds, and we must courageously face the difficulty of following entirely different ideals in moving towards the higher life".

But in his youth there had been a severe and constant strain upon his genuine love for a father whose fanatical methodism was sustained by a conviction that the coming of the Lord was nigh, "even at the door". At the age of twenty-five, Edmund's exemplary filial respect was provoked to this: "It is quite useless, I know, to appeal to you against such a letter as your last. What is gracious or courteous or sympathetic becomes absolutely nothing to you when you approach these topics". With his natural instincts and gifts for literature, Edmund was bound to drift or march away from so blighting a code, but it is in the process of his emancipation that we find testimony to the moral excellence of which I speak. As a young man, while he was first refreshing himself in the air and light of poetry, he still for a time observed the example of his Plymouth brethren, teaching in a Sunday school and working for Doctor Barnardo in the slums of London. But he soon found that he had neither heart nor ability for these pursuits, and abandoned them. Long before middle age he had discarded for ever what he called "the splendid metallic rigour" that had been imposed upon his youth. The fine thing was that in rejecting its evils, he never forgot its comelier lessons. Nurtured in an atmosphere of wrath and judgement, as the years went by he found moral censure becoming distasteful and finally impossible. In moments of personal excitement he might invoke it, but it was

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always a manifest pretence. In his later letters, tolerance is a recurrent theme. "Less and less can I endure the idea of punishing a man—who is not cruel—because he is unlike other men." And again, "I have long outlived the wish that anybody should receive any moral impression". And yet again, "The author must be a curious person, so completely a-moral and detached. It is refreshing to read him after the nausea of letters to *The Times* by the Bishops of —— and ——".

Thus he escaped the demons. But out of Plymouth he retained a certain discipline that never failed him. The routine of his life was perfectly ordered, and in the fulfilment of every obligation he was punctilious. Apart from squalls, his intellectual and social life was perfectly harmonious, conducted with an economy that made the most of it for himself, for his friends, and for his work. No man has ever done himself and his talents fuller justice. He once told me that in rereading the Victorians he was more and more convinced that of them all Matthew Arnold had least waste tissue. It was a triumph of his own character that in the management of his life there was none.

VIII

"Gosse", says Mr. Charteris, "was never mercenary. His tendency was always to take the terms that were offered, without exploring further the market value of his wares. He appeared perfectly content with the results." Towards the end of his life he one day told me what payment he was receiving for certain work. I was horrified at its inadequacy, and begged him to ask for better terms, which I was sure would at once be conceded. He agreed that the arrangement was not handsome, but said that it would be too disagreeable a matter for discussion.

The last time I saw him was on March 20, 1928, two months before he died. I had been to some function for lunch, and was walking along Pall Mall, contemplating the pavement. I was half aware of something familiar passing me, and a few yards further on I turned round. I saw the receding figure of Gosse, and for the first time I was struck by his age. I hurried back after him, and placing my arm in his, asked him where he was going. To the Piccadilly Tube station. He seemed to be too old for solitary wandering among London traffic, and I proposed myself for company. On the way up the Haymarket he told me that he was troubled. He had to attend an Ibsen dinner at the Norwegian Legation that evening, and was anxious about getting home afterwards. I was going to the same dinner, and asked if I might be his escort. This relieved his mind, and I saw him descending by the lift. At night he waited until courtesy allowed him to suggest to me that he would like to leave. I was also taking H. G. Wells home. Mr. Charteris quotes a letter from Gosse written to Henry James in 1912:

> Have you read *Marriage*? Too hard, metallic, rhetorical. I plucked up courage in both hands, and wrote and told him so—warned him against the growing *hardness* of his books. He replied with the greatest good-nature, not the least offended, saying he believed it to be true, and that he should make a strong effort to throw it off. I thought it charming of him to take it in this simple and charming way.

Subsequently there had been some coolness between them. When they got into the back seat of my small car together, I think they had not see anything of each other for a long time. But they at once fell to talking with the greatest cordiality. I heard Gosse telling Wells of his lasting admiration for certain of his books. The praise clearly gave the pleasure that it always did. Drawing up outside 17, Hanover Terrace, I was told by Gosse that my poor old Uncle was very much obliged to me, but that my car was an uncommonly difficult one to get out of, as it was. Wells and I manoeuvred him through the entanglements of the front seat, and watched him up the steps of his house. He said Good-night, but it was Good-bye.

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AUTHORS ARE AWFUL

by A Publisher

AUTHORS, epsecially those responsible for our current reading matter, are as a tribe an ungrateful, egotistical, selfish and unprincipled lot; a nuisance to have around the home, a trial to their families, and a perpetual worry to their publishers. They are usually dull conversationalists and surprisingly stupid. Jealous and unsympathetic towards each other, they do, however, manage to hold a few beliefs in common. They are unanimous in regarding any book publisher as a sort of combination of Jesse James, Simon Legree and Shylock. They are convinced that publishers are interested solely in ruining their reputations as artists and in selling as few copies of their books as possible. They are certain that their talent is unappreciated and they are always sure that they could do better with another book concern.

It is true that the relationship between author and publisher is not idyllic. It is also true that in the past authors have suffered at the hands of their publishers. But in this day such mistreatment is exceptional. Authors are the pampered pets of their publishers and are ready to blame everything from an economic depression to a thwarted love affair on the hopeful fellow who brings out their books. It matters little what the intrinsic merit or the sales possibilities of a book are; if it fails to sell it is no one's fault but the publisher's. It is the simplest way to explain their failures and salve their conceit.

This attitude on the part of an author is no doubt partly the publisher's fault. Competition is keen, the presses must be kept running, and the publisher is willing to take chances. He pays money for books not yet written and is not above occasionally stealing an author from a fellow publisher's list. This state of affairs is responsible for the inflated ego of the writer. He has become almost impossible to deal with, and has in consequence developed a set of ethics that wouldn't pass muster in a racketeer's union.

All of which points to the obvious conclusion that publishing, like other business, has its troubles, but other businesses do not have authors—and that is their luck.

Professional writers may be divided roughly—if you can handle them that way—into various classes of annoyances. A most virile species, numerically large, consists of those writers who invariably argue over royalty statements and accept, only under protest and with an air of "Well, I know I'm being cheated", the accounting sent to them by their publishers. Another good-sized group are those who complain long, hard, and loud about the advertising, or lack of it, done for their book. The super-salesmen are another pesky group. They spend their days haunting bookshops and their nickels making frantic telephone calls to their publisher to inform him that "Ye Little Booke Nooke" (total capacity one hundred and thirty-five volumes) has no

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copy of their opus in sight. The binding, wrapper, blurb and type experts are another class that cannot be overlooked. They are certain that the failure of their book is due to one or more of these causes. The "prima donnas" are a group that do their share in prematurely ageing their publishers. Nothing satisfies them; if their name does not lead the catalogue or their book does not receive most of the advertising space or if they are made to wait in a publisher's anteroom more than three minutes, the war is on. A most embarrassing group are the "subtle workers". They haunt the retreats of book reviewers and, when they have cornered the erudite gentlemen of the press, turn on charm to hypnotize the reviewer into giving their books special attention.

A minor class of annoyers are those authors who in some mysterious manner become imbued with the idea that books are produced without cost. It is their practice to pop into the office of the publisher's publicity representative and hand him a list of names as long as the signatures on a petition to Congress and ask—demand—that all receive free copies. The creators of your reading matter labor under the delusion that this method of distribution does a lot for a book. It does. It decreases the natural sales, since most of the people on the list are friends or relatives of the author who would have had to buy the book if only in self-defense.

Publicity hounds or camera lice, as they have been picturesquely christened by some rowdy newspaper men, also cause their share of trouble. These are the scribbling ladies and gentlemen who rush to the telephone every time a book page appears to ask the publisher when the conspiracy to keep their books from a palpitating public will end. They often point out that the press has not asked them their views on any number of subjects. In this classification must be placed those writers who, because they haven't been interviewed by Harry Salpeter, invited to tea by Isabel Paterson, or had their books reviewed by Harry Hansen, are certain that a campaign of sabotage is being carried on.

Such classifications might be extended almost indefinitely and it is the exceptional author who fails to find a place in one or more of them. In a book published not long ago that purported to expose the inside workings of a publishing house, a list of loyal authors, those who had remained with the same publishers through the years, was set down. Since the book has appeared, three of these so-called loyal fellows have changed publishers and only one of them for a purely monetary consideration. The others had in past years run the gamut of publishers before they realized that it didn't make very much difference what trade mark was stamped on the bottom of their books.

Give heed to the sad experience of a publisher who for many years supported an English writer in a style to which he had no business to be accustomed. Over this period the publisher sent a sustaining monthly check to his author—a poet, a minor one, whose poetry did not sell. The publisher hoped that some day he would receive a salable novel from the Englishman. He finally did receive a novel—a war story. Delighted, he became over-enthusiastic and indulged in an advertising orgy far out of proportion to the book's sales. About ten thousand copies were finally disposed of, but netted the publisher no profit. The former "Grub Streeter", however, due to the advertising and extensive publicity, gained enough recognition to become valuable to magazines specializing in "names". Other publishers, misled by this synthetic fame, thought his book had sold many more copies than it actually had and made attractive offers for his next novel. When it came time for this author to deliver the book for which the publisher already had a contract, he began a series of complaining letters and finally asked to be released from his contract—giving as a reason an alleged overcharge of

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twenty-five dollars for author's alterations. The publisher allowed him to break his contract.

Here is another touching example of gratitude and loyalty as practised by authors. A publisher accepted a book by a completely unknown writer and had the good fortune to sell nearly one hundred thousand copies at five dollars a copy. The author earned over a period of a year more than eighty thousand dollars in royalties, of which all but a few thousand had been paid. When the publisher, hard pressed for money, asked the author for three months' time in which to pay the balance, he was informed in a curt note that unless the amount was paid promptly a lawsuit would be instituted. The same author had asked for and received an additional large unearned advance before the book began to sell.

Perhaps the prize story of ingratitude is the one that concerns a writer of popular biographies. A reformed Socialist, he was successful with his first book and each succeeding book brought even better returns. Large advance payments were made by the publisher willingly and relations between them were most amicable. The author heard a rumour, not entirely unfounded, that his book concern was experiencing financial difficulties. A few weeks later his publisher called on him and explained the entire situation, telling the author that he hoped to get back on his feet with the publication of the biographer's next book. The answer given by the writer was a signed contract made with another house three days before this meeting.

The loyalty of writers is something like a late April blizzard, only not so permanent. A teacher had written a novel. Having a friend in a publishing house he submitted it to him and, much to his surprise and great joy, the book was found suitable for publication. It enjoyed a mild success. The next book, through an unexplained freak, sold thousands of copies. The author immediately received offers from many publishers, but he spent weeks telling everyone of his undying gratitude to his friend and making statements about the sacred obligation of friendship. When it came time to receive his third novel his original publisher found that he had signed a contract with another concern months before, during the height of his oratorical storm on the subject of loyalty.

Too much attention seems to spoil both children and authors. A perfect example is the mournful tale told by a disgusted publisher who had taken up a female novelist who wrote sweet but rather slight novels. By dint of excessive exploitation her first book sold rather well, her second was more successful, but when her third was released the economic depression was at its height and the book failed to do as well as her previous efforts. She immediately made a demand for large advance payments and upon being refused, changed publishers. She has changed twice since then.

The Publisher and Bookseller, the English trade journal of the book business, printed an interesting story recently showing how an author's conceit and unreasonableness caused his publisher embarrassment and resulted in his receiving poor notices in the press.

His first book was sent unsolicited to a publishing office. It showed promise but, in itself, was undistinguished. When it was accepted for publication, the editorial adviser of the concern wrote an announcement to that effect and sent it off to the literary editors. The author, seeing the announcement in print, became enraged and insisted that the notice be changed. He sent his own idea of how the book should be presented. He compared himself to Priestley, Wells and Bennett. The publisher, because of the insistence, then wrote an exaggerated blurb about the book. Instead of being treated kindly by the critics as a first novelist the newcomer was attacked unmercifully and his publisher criticized for misrepresenting the worth of the book.

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A rather amusing story illustrating the greed of an author concerns a young man who wrote historical fiction. He was comparatively happy with his publisher until an authors' agent attached himself to him and poured into his slightly distended ears a dissertation on the cupidity of his publishers. The agent asked to be allowed the privilege of handling his future work. The author was convinced, but explained that his contract called for another book. The agent, hot on the chase, advised his future client to make a demand for an advance payment twice as large as he had been accustomed to receive. Much to the chagrin of the agent the publisher acceded to the author's demands.

What happened when a very successful woman novelist had to choose between being "literary" and "popular" was told by an editor of a prominent book concern. The lady already had had five books published by the same house when she conceived the idea that the critics were not taking her seriously enough. She was sure it was her publisher's fault and changed to another concern which, although not so large, was known for its "literary quality". After the new house had released two books she discovered that she was receiving attention from the critics, but it was the wrong kind. She quickly went back to her original publisher.

An episode not without its humour happened last year when an author who had written his second novel broke off relations with one of the most prominent publishers in New York solely because his wife was able to convince him, after a great deal of persistent nagging, that the reason his book didn't sell was because the jacket was not truly representative of the contents of the book. The author was able to work himself into a state of indignation which lasted until he had signed a contract with another publisher, who is allowing him to choose his own book-jacket.

Humility is rarely a characteristic of an author. The only humble authors are those waiting to hear whether or not their manuscripts have been accepted. But the egotism of the accepted author is something pathological. The *grand prix* goes to a psychiatrist, the author of a book which was merely a compilation of the work of a group of lecturers. After an advertisement of the book had appeared he called his publisher and with an injured air complained bitterly of the fact that his name was in smaller type than that of his subjects, some of whom were among the world's greatest modern thinkers. He was also annoyed because these thinkers did not send him letters of congratulation.

The favourite lament of many authors is that the publisher has allowed the edition of a book to become exhausted before printing another edition. One young lady, who had written a psychological novel, dropped into a bookstore and asked for her book. She was told copies were not procurable because the publisher was temporarily out of stock. She made straight for the publisher's office and arrived out of breath but thoroughly aroused. An interview failed to appease her and she left in a huff, determined to break her contract, the terms of which gave her publisher an option to publish her next work. She sat down at her typewriter and by dint of typing two words 25,000 times each, finished what she claimed was a book. When the publisher received it he thought his author had gone Gertrude Stein, and almost accepted the book. He was stopped only because both the words used were obscene.

The minor pests are typified by a female who, when her book was ready to appear, delivered an impromptu talk to her publisher's underlings stating unequivocably that she did not care if anyone read her book —she had written her message and was satisfied. She ended this stirring talk by informing her slightly bored listeners that she wanted no publicity of a personal nature and above all things hated speaking engagements or interviews. A week later, learning that a department store was holding a book week

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at which the authors of the moment would speak, she called up her publisher and said that she had delayed her trip because she knew she would be expected to appear before her public. She was hurt beyond repair when it was found that the only way she could appear at this book week would have to be in an orchestra seat.

Perhaps the height of egotistical conduct concerns a newspaper cartoonist whose drawings were being published in book form. His publisher lived far out on Long Island. One Sunday he received a call from his artist requesting his immediate appearance in the city on a matter of importance. The publisher, loth to go, tried to get out of it; but the author insisted and the publisher went, only to be greeted with the exciting news that Charlie Chaplin had said, probably in a moment of aberration, that the artist was a genius. The publisher was instructed to use Mr. Chaplin's statement in all future advertising.

Booksellers use an effective system in discouraging writers from becoming too troublesome. One of the largest stores in New York City has a standing rule that if any author comes into the store and complains that his book is not being prominently displayed or is not being sold in sufficient quantities, that book is to be taken off the counters and placed either under the tables or in the back of the store and is to be sold only when asked for by title. Another bookseller who controls a chain of circulating libraries simply places a prohibitive price on the "lending cost" of any book the author of which has caused the clerks trouble by his "sales promotion".

Most authors do not realize that these methods are used by booksellers and few authors can resist the temptation of stopping by and seeing how the opus is doing. There was one fellow, a writer of many successful romantic novels, whose conceit took an awful wallop when he picked up a copy of his book and asked the clerk the price. "Two dollars," said the clerk. The author, in a gay mood and while the clerk was away, scribbled his name on the fly-leaf. When the clerk returned he held up the book and said, "How much is this copy?" The clerk glanced at it and said, "Oh, that's spoiled. You can have it for seventy-five cents".

The classic remark which illustrates what the relationship between author and publisher should be is charged to the credit of one of the smaller publishers. Worn and wearied by the incessant chatter of a female poet who for weeks had been telling him how to manufacture, sell and advertise her book he finally said to her in exasperation, "Did I tell you how to write the book?" and receiving an answer in the negative he said, "Please don't tell me what to do with it after you have given it to me".

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THE POETRY OF EDITH WHARTON

by Robert Sencourt

THE test of literature is the standard of perfection. For it, as much as in the art of painting, the aim and the criterion is beauty. There was never a time when leading writers paid less attention to this truth, and they pay less to it in the New World than in the Old. It is this declension in the standards of taste which has diverted attention from Mrs. Wharton's best work, and which is the reason why her remarkable poetry is everywhere, and particularly in America, practically unknown.

As Mr. Lucien Price has recently pointed out in *Winged Sandals*, Europe is the ancestral possession of the United States. America as we know it nowadays is no longer Red India: her growth does not mean the rise of a people new to Europe. She is a new country only in the sense that Germany and Italy are new countries; that is to say, they are each a new national combination of a variety of old European stocks. There are of course differences in the type of newness. America did not inherit the material monuments of humanism: her people colonized an earth unmarked by the expressions of the spirit of man. Furthermore, her Colonial tradition marked a break in religion and culture with the artistic life of the Middle Ages which flowered in the Renaissance. Her people were at first a sturdy, independent, active and comparatively uncultivated class of English farmers and industrialists. There was not much variety in the type. Their innate strength and great practical virtues found the inspiration to the life of perfection in books, and especially in the anthology of Hebrew literature which as the Bible had been for hundreds of years Europe's supreme religious classic. The Americans were, as Mr. Lewis Mumford said in his brilliant work *The Golden Day*, "the People of a Book". But they are so no longer. As immigrants from other parts of Europe, and immigrants from Africa, have come to weigh in equal numbers against the British stock, the American people have left the standard of traditional excellence which came with them in their Book. Like that of the Germans, the strength and the genius of the people has taken a new turn: it has become absorbed on the one side in mass production; on the other in diversion. The joy of admiring excellence no longer marks anything but the standards of a few: they have to a larger extent than even the rest of the modern world lost delight in beauty, and the nearest they come to it is wit: an exercise of the mind, which, though strenuous and at times great fun, aims at incongruity rather than excellence, as America's taste has turned to stimulant rather than to good living.

Mrs. Wharton through all has remained one of the most classic and European of Americans. She has the keenest wit, and moves eagerly through the intricate and playful sequence of the dance of life. Her dance is an art. It is an ordered expression of de-

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light: restraint arranges her impulses into pattern. She is in fact a strayed reveller from America's Golden Day. To have remained so elastically upright in the tumble of intellectual disorder marks an unusual individual strength. This is indeed her power. She has been called an exquisite, but without the virility of the Colonial tradition she could not have kept her standards intact; she has in fact that particular strength which shows itself in delicacy. Her wit is subtle, with the sensitiveness which interchanges what is faintly malicious with warmth of sympathy. For sympathy, when really tender, cannot fail to probe delicately: and those who are sensitive to excellence do not overlook looseness of standard.

This type of intuitive observation of the nuances of a situation, which is something she shares with her old friend, Henry James, gains its strength from the force of her temperament. It was not on Henry James that she founded her art but on Tolstoy, on Turgenev, on Balzac and George Eliot. There is in fact in Mrs. Wharton not only strong passion, but a certain grimness which recalls both the Greek Tragedian and the Puritan. This passion and this restraint work in her art together as they do in the sombre brilliance of *The Scarlet Letter*. If there is one theme which dominates Mrs. Wharton's work (and there is one theme which dominates the work of most great writers), it is that of competent will, working with intricate and sensitive reason and the subtlest social sense to dominate the disorder of passion, especially, not in the act, but in the psychology, of adultery. Of brutishness, there is here of course none: but there are occasions when even the highest and finest passion is illicit. This is the theme of Mrs. Wharton.

It would be indeed a fascinating study to trace the suggestions of this theme through all her work. But it will be sufficient to point out that it is the theme of her first and perhaps her most classical work in prose, *Ethan Frome*. It is the theme of the powerful and vivid portrait of modern American life in which her genius has renewed itself in all its generosity and vigour—in *Hudson River Bracketed*. And if we open the collection of dramatic situations—more than anything else in the Maupassant style—which she has just published, we see that it is once more the opening theme, under the significant title *Atrophy*, and it appears to recur yet again in another story of the love of two women for the same man. There is one theme which was classic to the Victorian period, the period of "soiled doves": it was the magnetism of the handsome and brilliant villain, a tradition which comes down from Richardson and *The Vicar of Wakefield*. It invites the woman to ask Meredith's question:

> Ask the heart that wildly went
> To ashes why the flames are spent?
>
> And has he borne his manhood high
> For whom she cast that gambler's die,
> Her heart? And doth she through
> Her senses read, and love renew?

That is not Mrs. Wharton's theme: with her, as we saw, it is rather the subtler problem, with its thousand insinuating complications, of a woman who is compelled for some reason of traditional morals to deny, not only for herself who needs it but to him who would be magnified by it, the love of the most admirable man.

Mrs. Wharton does not state the theme as M. Bourget would state it, nor work it out, as he does, in all its complexity in relation to the full light of Catholic tradition and casuistry, guiding and tracing through drama and experience the dominance of morals over passions. That is true to the life of a French Catholic, because to him reason has stated so completely and so finally the terms of the contract with which passion, no matter how impetuous, is to run in subservience. But the English mind does not run in that harness, still less the American. Morals and passions are much less in touch with reason: they are there, but work through the machinery of

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instinct. They flee from illumined statement. M. Bourget's friend, Maupassant, has said that in novels psychology should be silent as it is in real life. To that Mrs. Wharton might add that moral principle should be as psychology. Their difference from M. Bourget is the difference between a mind where philosophy is not one with the rest of life, and one where it is so. And the absence of philosophy gives something more poignant, more suggestive, more intense to art. The single situation opens a gate onto the Egdon Heath of life: for American society, in the lights and shades of Mrs. Wharton's painting, shows itself to be something of a wilderness.

In her poems, there is nothing to show a background of American society. They, like some of the masterpieces of Longfellow and of Henry James, show the American back in the American's ancestral manor, the American at home with the masterpieces of European genius. The earliest of them are called *Two Backgrounds*, and these backgrounds are those of two famous paintings: La Vierge aux Donateurs and Mona Lisa. Each is a sonnet, and the sonnet's precision of form is excellently suited to the careful pattern of Mrs. Wharton's poetry. It suits the adroitness with which she makes the detail of a classic picture the subject of her heart's unburdening: she looks at the blue city painted by Leonardo: its ramparts and its pinnacles suggest the illusion and the dream in which, in spite of earth's constraint, two sundered souls, each like the painted city "lit with wild lightnings from the heaven of pain", find a chance to meet and mingle in a bare heaven where pain is transubstantiated into rapture.

It is evident that the poetess sought refuge from a hidden grief in art: as she looks into the painting of the Second Renaissance, so she looked into the great Cathedral which, with the *Divina Commedia*, is the most striking monument of the First. Chartres was alive with an intense and brilliant beauty; and perhaps the end of all poignancy was within her reach at that moment. Her great countryman had written the finest of his sonnets to compare Dante's poem with a great Gothic church; at Chartres we find the Gothic church in its majestic instancy. But to see it in its beauty, one must see it alive in the continuance of its function; one must see it as it was meant to be—the background of the Mass. Longfellow sees it so: he hears the organ and the choirs and "the old Latin hymn of peace and love"; upon his bowed head falls the benediction, and to him

> The melodious bells among the spires
> O'er all the housetops and through heaven above
> Proclaim the elevation of the Host.

But to Edith Wharton, the Cathedral was a background for something else; a background which appeared to make its mighty framework grow

> To be a part of nature's self, withdrawn
> From hot humanity's impatient woes. . . .

For her the symbolic presence of the Virgin Mother was but a "rigid fetish", with blank eyes: while from the flamed windows over the three portals, the saints who mingle in their roses of fire are—like the topmost boss and finial—reserved for the few crones who are "familiars of the tomb" and the "stranded driftwood of faith's ebbing sea". The secret had been missed: Huysmans had come already to turn to impassioned celebration of the life of Chartres the passion he had given to loose women. Longfellow, out of the virtuous Unitarianism of Boston, had understood: what was it that left an appreciation so much finer chill? He could not write so musically, or so surprisingly, as the poetess when in her opening she soars upon his theme:

> Immense, august, like some Titanic bloom,
> The mighty choir unfolds its lithic core,
> Petalled with panes of azure, gules and or,
> Splendidly lambent in the Gothic gloom,

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And stamened with keen flamelets that illume
The pale high altar. . . .

This seems to lead us to the brink of a supreme religious poem: a poem which could proceed like Hopkins's wild cry of aspiration:

Now burn, new born to the world,
Double naturéd name,
The heaven flung, heart fleshed, maiden furled
Miracle-in-Mary-of-flame.

(He is there at Chartres in *Notre Dame de la belle Verrière*).

Mid-numbered He in Three of the thunder-throne!
Not a doom's day dazzle in his coming, nor dark as he came
Kind, but royally reclaiming his own;
A released shower, let flash to the shire, not a lightning of fire hard-hurled.

If at Chartres the secret had been missed, was it also missed when Mrs. Wharton essayed the story of Saint Margaret of Cortona, the Poor Clare who had been rescued first by a human lover from her girlish shame? This is a dramatic monologue, such as Browning often, and Tennyson sometimes, wrote. The saint begins:

. . . since you know
How I have toiled and prayed and scourged and striven,
Mothered the orphan, waked beside the sick,
Gone empty that mine enemy might eat,
Given bread for stones in famine years, and channelled
With vigilant knees the pavement of this cell,
Till I constrained the Christ upon the wall
To bend His thorn-crowned Head in mute forgiveness . . .

Ah! here is the secret of Chartres! It leads on to a strong, to a great piece of work. With full dramatic vividness, the dying saint tells the story of her sin, and of her saving lover: of how he was murdered, and her passion turned from her earthly to her Heavenly Redeemer. And then, how, she asks herself, was she to judge and sunder them? Was there not between them, between him with whom she had lived in the irregularity which the Church called mortal sin, and Him who had endued her with saintly purity, like the Magdalen of the Sainte Baume in Provence, a resemblance; no, more, the actual identity between the delegate and his principal, between Christ and the Churchman who was incorporated into his mystical body? This is the question which she puts first to her confessor, and then to the Saviour who had miraculously approved her sanctity:

If ever prayer hath ravished me so high
That its wings failed and dropped me in Thy breast,
Christ, I adjure Thee! By that naked hour
Of innermost commixture, when my soul
Contained Thee, as the paten holds the Host,
Judge Thou alone between this priest and me;
Nay, rather, Lord, between my past and present,
Thy Margaret and that other's,—whose she is
By right of salvage—and whose call should follow!
Thine? Silent still.—Or his, who stooped to her
And drew her to Thee by the bands of love?
Not Thine? Then his?
Ah, Christ—the thorn-crowned Head
Bends . . . bends again . . .

Nowhere has Mrs. Wharton excelled the mingling of mysticism with straightforwardness in this poem, or allowed her argument so much of the bared strength of passion.

To gauge the force and limitations of her art (for Mrs. Wharton never allows herself the ultimate surrender to grandeur) one cannot do better than observe the force of mind and will which she puts into her other great dramatic monologue, *Vesalius in Zante*. Who was Vesalius? An anatomist of the Renaissance whose work superseded the physiology of Galen but who had not enough strength of character to remain loyal to his science; who to avoid the uproar which his scientific doctrines occasioned became court physician in Madrid. The poetess makes his story an argument for the force of character to conquer fate. Her method in this suggests

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Browning. But the argument of this great poem is her own, as also is the fine phrasing which might be called Tennysonian or Elizabethan, because it takes its place so naturally in the highest tradition of English blank verse: the physician compares himself with the founder of the Jesuit society: Ah, how I pitied him! the anatomist avers. And yet which was the greater man? Can it be disputed for a moment that Saint Ignatius Loyola did a greater work in the world than poor Vesalius?

> . . . for what he willed, he willed
> As those do that forerun the wheels of fate,
> Not take their dust—that force the virgin hours,
> Hew life into the likeness of themselves
> And wrest the stars from their concurrences.
> So firm his mould; but mine the ductile soul
> That wears the livery of circumstance
> And hangs obsequious on its suzerain's eye.
> For who rules now? The twilight-flitting monk,
> Or I, that took the morning like an Alp?
> He held his own, I let mine slip from me.

The mysticism of Ignatius, the way he lost himself in something larger than himself, which is the secret not only of the saint, but of the supreme genius, that preservation of self in self-surrender, Mrs. Wharton's Vesalius does not omit to notice. He sees resolution, and something more:

> That was the lesson that Ignatius taught—
> The one I might have learned from him, but would not—
> That we are but stray atoms on the wind,
> A dancing transiency of summer eves,
> Till we become one with our purpose, merged
> In that vast effort of the race which makes
> Mortality immortal.
>
> *"He that loseth his life*
> *Shall find it":* so the Scripture runs.
> But I so hugged the fleeting self in me,
> So loved the lovely perishable hours,
> So kissed myself to death upon their lips,
> That on one pyre we perished in the end—
> A grimmer bonfire than the Church e'er lit!

And yet Vesalius had one consoling thought: that fame was secondary, since his truths were out, and he in turn had done his part.

> . . . The sky is wide,
> And you may yet uncover other stars.

These are the greater pieces in what is clearly the earlier period of the poems of *Artemis to Actæon.* They show a mind and heart which are rich with the blood that ripened in America's Golden Day; but they show also something in the American tradition which too often has kept it from the utmost heights: it is an excess of the personal will, a self-restraint which has overflowed its bounds, an undue desire to return to the doctrine that self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control are alone the qualities that lead life to sovereign power. For the vast effort of the race which is one with the immanent will can bear us as far as Hardy: it can produce works of genius as these are poems of genius: they "take the morning like an Alp", but there are some works so sublime that they rise above the topmost crags to the thunders and lightnings of the universe, and ride upon the storm, or take us higher still to where we see how

> *Il ben nostro in questo ben s'affina*
> *Che quel che vuol Iddio e noi volemo*

where we wing the blue serene which, as Dante said, is the final source of all of our light, *il sereno che non si turba mai.* But that, it is true, is very rarely reached.

The fine sense of excellence that we find in Mrs. Wharton's poetry is all that we are in general justified in asking of poetry, and that is clearer still in the later verses of this neglected but most admirable collection, the most august volume of poetry, we do not hesitate to say, that has come from the pen of an American, and the sanest vindication of America's unity with Europe. Edith Wharton rises to her highest in the first poem, the title poem, *Artemis to Actæon,* in her assertion that the best mirror of eternity's unsuccessiveness is the supreme moment: it

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is the truth that Donne maintained when he said that

> Love no tomorrow knows nor yesterday
> But truly keeps his first last everlasting day.

Mrs. Wharton puts it with a classic splendor of phrase:

For immortality is not to range
Unlimited through vast Olympian days,
Or sit in dull dominion over time;
But this—to drink fate's utmost at a draught,
Nor feel the wine grow stale upon the lip,
To scale the summit of some soaring moment,
Nor know the dulness of the long descent,
To snatch the crown of life and seal it up
Secure forever in the vaults of death!

In this period Mrs. Wharton wrote a sequence of eight sonnets, *The Mortal Lease*. This is her most personal and closely woven work, and like Longfellow's sonnets on the *Divina Commedia* this is, when all is said, the greatest monument of her genius: in the love of two beings, she begins, there was the whole physical past of the earth and its whole spiritual future. It is the favourite theme of the poet of *Modern Love*: it echoes Donne's conviction that "love is mix't of all stuffs".

Because the currents of our love are poured
Through the slow welter of the primal flood
From some blind source of monster-haunted
mud, . . .
Shall we deny . . .
The stubborn questing for a phantom shore . . .
Shall we forego the deeper touch of awe
On love's extremest pinnacle, where we
Winging the vistas of infinity,
Gigantic on the mist our shadows saw?

In the belated blood of this woman of New York is much more than the nymph beside Ilissus; there is "the wild woodland woman", and the entranced nun who in her soul became like at last Saint Margaret of Cortona, the spouse of the Christ whom her soul contained within her.

A question arises, tremulous but strong: were not the future and the past which all mirrored eternity summed up in the high moment of consummated passion? Did not the loud murmur of the lovers' blood, like waves beating upon a reef, leave within the quiet island of a serene because unsuccessive eternity? The theme of *Artemis* fills the high Schubert music of this sonnet:

Do I not know, some wingèd things from far
Are borne along illimitable night
To dance their lives out in a single flight
Between the moonrise and the setting star?

To stake all upon the single moment! That was the argument of passion, the argument of passion inwoven with informed and searching intellect, the argument of mind and soul and body in the vibrant tension of mutual interaction, the argument of all that gives a woman the genius of poetry. The moment came! And did it—*or did it not*—fling wide the doors upon eternity? Here was the chalice of love's human sacrament. Here the passionate—not the Holy—communion. Did that chalice globe in every drop the cosmic show? Did it contain all that man's craving heart can wring from the winepress of life? Time, poignancy and waiting still had their tale to tell. The secret of vision was not in that swift plunge of full experience into the abyss of ecstasy. The body's supremest moments are *not* ends in themselves:

Not thou, vain Moment! Something more than
thou
Shall write the score of what mine eyes have
wept,
The touch of kisses that have missed my brow,
The murmur of wings that brushed me while
I slept,
And some mute angel in the breast even now
Measures my loss by all that I have kept.

For there is in the world's history an aristocracy of grief. It is that the longings for which no human comforts glow turn upwards to the heaven of stars and blue. It is the theme and lesson of all tragedy as it is

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the blessedness of them that mourn. Grief brings us back to the truth of man's greatness: suffering is the only condition of spiritual grandeur: without it the auguster truths are hidden. This is the occasion of a touching sonnet which is the aftermath of *The Mortal Lease*:

One grief there is, the helpmeet of my heart,
That shall not from me till my days be sped,
That walks beside me in sunshine and in shade,
And hath in all my fortunes equal part.
At first I feared it, and would often start
Aghast to find it bending o'er my bed,
Till usage slowly dulled the edge of dread,
And one cold night I cried: *How warm thou art!*

But though suffering has led to greatness of soul, there is at times something chill in its sublimity; it is the Alp rather than the whole range of human earth. Mrs. Wharton looks from a lonely eminence, and has a vast range at her command, a range of beautiful things; a range, to amuse her, of incongruous things. Her spirit dwells on the august heights:

But he who on that lonely eminence
Watches too long the whirling of the spheres
Through dim eternities descending thence,
The voices of his kind no longer hears,
And, blinded by the spectacle immense,
Journeys alone through all the after years.

That is one of her experiences, but, though she may have often felt divided from the common things, from "hot humanity's impatient woes", and certainly she has nothing but a satiric eye for low humanity's banalities, she has been able to explore with grief many regions that otherwise would have been forbidding and indeed unintelligible:

. . . my grief has been interpreter
For me in many a fierce and alien land
Whose speech young Joy had failed to understand,
Plucking me tribute of red gold and myrrh
From desolate whirlings of the desert sand.

As mind and heart re-echo to the chaste music of these poems, one asks why it is that Mrs. Wharton should be known rather as novelist than poet: is there between the loose rhythms of prose and the close patterns of poetry an essential difference, or are they kindred expressions of the same art? We have no word to distinguish the prose of literature from common prose as we distinguish poetry from verse. But the difference is essential. We move from verse to poetry when the inspiring excitement is so high that the expression is at once so finely arranged and so rare that, though it deals with the things of sense, it is charged with a significance that far transcends them. To that significance, so associated with rhythmical delight, we give the name of artistic beauty. It is the delightful resplendence of an intelligible perfection. There are some writers who can attain it only when robed in the close-fitting garb of verse; that is to say when reason accepts the discipline of conscious patterns, and at the same time soars upon the rarer ether of poetry's surprises. For the poet, though he has earth beneath his wings, is an eagle in high skies:

From reddened eve
He views the rosy dawn.

But there are others who can accept the discipline in the wildness and nakedness of prose, which is, compared with classic poetry, a savage art. At the same time, it is a far subtler discipline, for two reasons: first that it is allowed neither the free expression of passion, nor the rare and heightened vocabulary; and secondly that, as it is used for purposes other than beauty, it is not always braced for excellence. Indeed, a prose consistently heightened and excellent, such as that of Jeremy Taylor and Browne, of Stevenson or Ruskin, will meet much captious criticism. It requires of its readers something of the poetic mood: and if it is generally maintained, the strain is high. If on the other hand, the soaring into beauty is occasional, the writer of prose will be accused of patching with purple.

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Mrs. Wharton has in her earlier and her later career written passages of remarkably distinguished prose. She rises to it naturally when she speaks of the beauty of a New England winter, whether in *Ethan Frome* or in *Hudson River Bracketed*. The electric air, the silver glint of the snow, the transformation of the forest into fairyland play upon her sensibilities till she writes her descriptions of them exquisitely. But though her novels have been consistently successful, one would not say that all of them were great literature. To write greatly, Aristotle said, depends on three things οἷα τε καὶ ἃ καὶ ὡς: on the subject, the treatment and the style. A rather satiric treatment of Colonial society in a manner to amuse it has given her many inspirations to sympathetic, and sometimes to finely finished writing, but America has furnished her with neither the people as subjects, nor the people as admirers, who inspire great literature. She has written her poetry so much more excellently than her prose because there she moved right away from New York and New England to the high, universal, and sublime things. Her life straining to a high tension gave the chord which is music and which is love.

Like Mr. A. E. Housman, that great tension was a thing that came and went. It came once to her and to him in a poignant fervour; it came to them both again in the high tragedy of the war, when the glooms of a vast annihilation spoke not alone of ruin but of glory. At the end of that time Mrs. Wharton published twelve poems—and later a thirteenth. In these the expression had less of grimness, less of restraint; her sculpture has turned from that of Scopas to Canova's; in some she chose that dangerous medium which is really neither prose nor poetry, the medium of free verse: but her high sense of excellence preserved her from its dangers.

For a moment on the glittering Provençal shore, she tastes the keen raptures of youth, or rather the rapture of youth preserved to the serenity of an Indian summer, the keener clearer joyance of *A Winter's Tale*:

> The lost years hasten to my feet.
> All is not pain their eyes declare,
> The shoreward ripples are their voice,
> The sunset, streaming through their hair
> Coils round me in a fiery flood
> And all the sounds of that rich air
> Are in the beating of my blood
> Crying: *Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice!*
> *Rejoice because such skies are blue,*
> *Each dawn, above a world so fair,*
> *Because such glories still renew*
> *To transient eyes the morning's hue,*
> *Such buds on every fruit tree smile,*
> *Such perfumes blow on every gale,*
> *Such constellated hangings veil*
> *The outer emptiness awhile;*
> *And these frail senses that were thine,*
> *Because so frail, and worn so fine,*
> *Are as a Venice glass where through*
> *Life's last drop of evening wine*
> *Shall like a draught of morning shine.*

This is a hymn of passion requited: and indeed the early poetry could not have been written without their taste and their capacity for joy which were, in one sense, their own fulfilment.

During the war, or on the war, Mrs. Wharton wrote some half-dozen poems. But though the war coincided with, and may indeed have occasioned, the new tension which inspired new poetry, these war poems are not her real subject. Like the others of the twelve poems, they are delicately and beautifully made, a firm embroidery of balanced, interwoven, fine, flashing, and flower-like silks; silks which are the spun fabric of a life which has lived on leaves, and now wings the air; silks which hold in their patterned sheen a secret akin to that of the glow-worm's or the fire-fly's life. But they will not be remembered as monuments of the war; she scented the war from afar: she was not, nor was even her young lover, bleeding in the trenches. Mrs. Wharton's intensity of sympathy is a mirror which flashes with the

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reflection of beautiful things, a record of the song of nightingales, or of mistral in the maquis.

We would recall and celebrate the peculiar fine elaborateness of her poetic genius rather in her thirteenth poem, and her "alternative epitaphs". "I will not say that you are dead" says the first:

I will not say that you are dead, but only
Scattered like seed upon the autumn breeze,
Renewing life where all seemed locked and lonely,
Stored in shut buds, and inarticulate trees.

And this theme is rounded in the epitaphs—on heart failure:

Death touched me where your head had lain.
What other spot could he have found
So tender to receive a wound,
So versed in all the arts of pain?
Love came and gave me wind and sun.
Love went and left me light and air.
Nor gave he anything more fair
Than what I found when he was gone.

The theme, although so completed to such finished and intricate excellence—we would even use the ultimate word, and say perfection—the theme on which Mrs. Wharton dwells is but one. It takes thoughts from *Adonaïs*: it recalls Byron's conviction, voiced so often and so diversely in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, that not satiated passion, but passion continued in all forms or yearnings, is what leads furthest to "the un-reached paradise of men's despair": it elaborates Shelley's great assurance that

Love's very pain is sweet,
But its reward is in the world divine
Which if not here it builds beyond the grave.

It is summed up in a new experience of earth, as the evening star glistens in a Provençal twilight, that

The age-long promise reappears,
And life is beauty fringed with tears.

* * *

As we review these poems, we cannot but voice a new amazement that they should be almost unknown; that they have never once been quoted in an anthology; and that the name of her who wrote them is mentioned in no books, or essays on poetry. They are beyond all argument the best that have been written by an American woman, and most American men. Sara Teasdale, fine as her work is, cannot compete with them; and they are as much more musical than the poignant cries of Emily Dickinson as they excel in meaning the uninspired verse of Emerson or Lowell. They will take their place in the same rank as the best of Longfellow or Whitman. And against their lack of lyrical spontaneity must be set the excellence of being so chastely wrought and moving in their intricacy with postures and presence so august.

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PORTRAITS EN BROCHETTE

by Benjamin De Casseres

DON MARQUIS

DON MARQUIS is Shelley trying to lasso the Golden Calf.

A born poet and bitter satirist, he invented the epigram "Money is a spiritual thing". He wrote it in an ill-omened idle moment to fill out his *Sun Dial* column. He looked at it when the boy brought him a copy just off the press at Lipton's bar down in Nassau street. Don studied the epigram under glass—Scotch—and the more he studied it the more he found in it.

It was at this moment, at Lipton's bar, he told me, that the Truth swam up to him out of his very bowels: the Golden Calf was Brahm; the double-eagle was the Blood and the Body. So, in this self-conversion, I relate the manner in which America lost a great satirist both in epigram and in verse. His real character creations came out of those pungent Falstaffian days in Lipton's hide-away booths. Out of those monstrous club steaks, highballs and ale-tanks came Hermione, the Lady Hound of Culture, a character second in viability only to Babbitt. From these memorable levees of Don on the leather cushions at Lipton's came also the Old Soak, Don's tribute to the Glories that were Rum. There were born, to the music of our glasses and the perpetual cosmic and near-cosmic prattle of Don, Archy the Cockroach, and Captain Peter Fitzurse. Lipton's was also the matrix of those thousands of epigrams, poetic, satiric, poisonous and brain-chortling, that have never been collected, but which should be, for nothing done in America can anywhere touch them in cynicism and condensed beauty.

Don is a sprawler, a dawdler, a lazy Bohemian, an all-night loller with the glass—a man whose tongue taps magic wells of imaginative wit. The only man that could ever equal him in talk was James Huneker. To Don Marquis there is a "story", an epigram, a poem in everything. He talks lazily as though he had all eternity to talk in.

There is a quiet ecstasy, a charm, an ancient culture about him that he once tried to throw off by acting and dressing like a banker. But suddenly the real Don plopped out again—heavy stick, tumbled locks, pipe, sports shirt: the real Don Marquis of the Mark Twain-Walt Whitman Pfaffian days, born just a little too late.

The Don Marquis that his booze-and-song cronies will always recall is the Marquis of *The Savage Portraits*, *Hermione* and the mask-slitting epigrams.

Tonnerre!—that Golden Calf turned out to be a bucking broncho.

SINCLAIR LEWIS

WHEN Sinclair Lewis stood in a pulpit in a town somewhere in the Bible Belt and, in order to demonstrate that there was no God, demanded

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of God that he strike him dead, I wish the Lord had quit his laying out of curved and cockeyed universes long enough to have given Lewis a shot of lumbago, a crick in his jawbone or an intellectual puny spell for a week. But God has a finer sense of humour than these professional atheists. The latter differ in no respect from old Isaiah and his Methodist descendants, who are always calling on God to destroy Babylon, Sodom or Atlantic City.

This gesture of Lewis's, who is, moreover, our greatest soil-and-stubble satirist, is typical of the man. He is essentially naïve. On this naïveté nature superposed a mass of red hair, which denotes a fiery temper. Naïveté and fiery temper fuse in the bowl of his ego. Result, as any psycho-chemical expert will tell you, moralic irony. "Red" Lewis is an atheistic farm-hand with an ear preternaturally developed to catch the lying overtones in all human speech. For printed dialogue that talks right into your brain he is unmatched. When the Nobel prize was given to the author of *Babbitt* Europe gave America the worst back-handed crack in the jaw she ever got, for Babbitt is America.

An anecdote about Lewis when he was still Jude the Obscure. Joel's "Bohemia", about 1912. A Saturday night, about 11 o'clock. The place was so crowded that Host Joel planted me at a table with a lanky, red-haired, gawky-looking fellow. He introduced us. The name Sinclair Lewis meant nothing to me at that time. What I meant to him I do not know; but this strange fellow, after announcing that he was from Sauk Center, Minnesota, said to my astonishment:

"You must be from Philadelphia."

"How do you know that, Mr. Lewis?"

"Because you left your spoon in your coffee-cup."

Atheist and Pantheist thereupon shook hands and proceeded to slip small glasses down the old swivel. The gang grew. At six A.M. Lewis proposed Childs, where he offered to out-butter-cake and out-buckwheat-cake any two men in the crowd, which he did, while the night manager of the restaurant kept punching checks.

This was the only time I ever met Sinclair Lewis, but after eighteen years he remains imbedded in my memory like one of Sorolla's sun-soaked, red-headed portraits. He need never have told me he was from Sauk Center, Minnesota, for his butter-and-wheat-cake *défi* would have stamped his Western bucolic origin instantly.

His Babbitt, his Gantry, his Carol Kennicott do not greatly interest me. That, I confess, is my loss, for Sinclair Lewis has up to date written the only authentic history extant of the twentieth-century American.

LUDWIG LEWISOHN

WHEN they all sat down by the waters of Babylon and wept and would not be comforted there was one among them who was immortal, who became the Wandering Jewish Niobe of the centuries. His name was Ludwig Lewisohn. Selah!

Now he sits by the waters of the Seine and still weeps, although the weeping, I'm told, grows beautifully less as his royalties from his tears, tears, not very idle tears, grow beautifully more. Selah!

His books on Jewry, his confessions and his exodus from Our Country convince me that Lewisohn is the Second Diaspora. The Messiah to come of the Jews may be a myth. But the Second Diaspora is a fact. While waiting for the Messiah, Ludwig chose the Left Bank as a waiting-room. It is here he thrives and weeps, fattens and g-nashes of his teeth, the shekels piling up, while his inbitten racial wounds spread. Selah!

Ah, *mes enfants*, it may yet hap that this our Hamlet of Jewry will blossom out as the first Falstaff of Israel, for hath not a Jew a gullet? Will not his goodly stomach laugh when lined with royalty-fed capon? Selah!

Our Ludwig was, in America, the Great

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Ostracized. There was a universal conspiracy to starve this Maccabee into submitting to something or other. They stole his *taleth*. They filched his Purim cake. They put yeast in his *matzoths*. They planted a ham in his icebox. The nasty, naughty Gentiles! He was even pronounced *meshuga* by some of his own immediate circle. The bum-bailiff of Persecution was always, in fact, tapping him on the shoulder. Hence the Diaspora. Away, away from the American *schlemihls* to the land where all Germans are free—France! Selah!

Lewisohn is a professor's writer. His style is like hard Camembert cheese. There is a sickly plaint in all he writes. In his essays on creative criticism, French poets or German writers he is meticulous Self-Consciousness seated on an iceberg lecturing to the Nordic voids.

A writer in the New York *Herald Tribune* recently said, "Ludwig Lewisohn is individual in everything. In this age of typewriters he himself employs pen and ink, and sometimes even a quill". Such is the definition of Individuality in 1931! Selah!

GEORGE SYLVESTER VIERECK

If Frank Harris is the Cloaca Maxima of the weaknesses of genius, then George Sylvester Viereck is the man in the rumble-seat of the Car of Fame.

To stretch his legs, he sometimes gets out of the car and walks up and down the Earth trying to get a hitch onto the coat-tails of Some One in the Public Eye.

He began his literary life with poems to Saint Oscar and Saint Huneker. He bounded into print in the early days of the century by announcing that Oscar Wilde was not dead, but was a salesman in a well-known bookstore then at Broadway and Fourteenth Street. That hoax collapsed. Again nine months gone with "agenbite of inwit", he announced he was the nephew of the present Dare-Devil of Doorn. Many things about Viereck lead me to believe that this is not a hoax. There was about Viereck in those early days all the glittering, vibrant exhibitionism of the Hohenzollerns.

He was the Prodigy, the Show-Boy of all Bohemian lunches. He bragged of his satanic sins. But Alexander Harvey once whispered in my ear, "Do you know that *secretly* Viereck leads a respectable life?"

This juvenile hang-over from the brilliant, decadent, subtle London of the nineties did a great service to this Our Native Land. He was one of the early ringleaders of the reaction against Puritanism. He hurled a brick a week at Blue Snoot. But in stooping for bricks he found a crock of gold—and the fabled Viereck of Crimson Sins dissolved into the international Machiavelli and hitch-hiker.

In this regard, he has had curious and, to the penetrative eye, most amusing oscillations. When the war broke out he wrote a soulfully adolescent hymn of hate called *France: the Harlot of the World*. It was full of swing and a delightful ancient venom. But when Frank Harris was lately threatened with imprisonment by the French government for his *My Life and Loves*, I was astonished, in my simple way, to get from Viereck a petition for mercy, with his name signed to it, addressed to the French government, in which he appealed to France as the mother of art, civilization, culture and many other virtues that we scarcely associate with harlotry. Ah, genius, genius!—thou art a veritable flitterwee!

Like all prodigies, he blew up. He was undoubtedly a genius. But, as in the case of most prodigies, devolution instead of evolution set in. Viereck's genius has now passed into talent. Nature was kind to him, for devolution from the heights to the plains is the primrose path to the Castle of Mazuma.

His brain was, and is, subtle, satanic. No man wears his mask better. He is palimpsest over palimpsest. The electric, vital touch, however, is gone from his voice and manner.

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He now looks like a retired German Wunderkind living in Switzerland.

And it is thus that bank accounts make cowards of us all, as my Lord Hamlet saith, for Viereck, born of the sacred breath of Saint Huneker and Saint Oscar, is now merely a case-study of pragmatic intellectualism, or what have you? I liked him better as the Have-you-seen-me? of the Roosevelt Octad.

SAMUEL HOFFENSTEIN

GEORGE SAND tells this of Balzac:

"One day he returned from Russia, and during a dinner where he was placed next to me he dilated with admiration on the prodigies of absolute authority. That was his ideal just then, he said. He told me of a ferocious deed of which he had been a witness and was seized with a fit of laughter which had something convulsive about it. I whispered in his ear, 'That incident makes you want to cry, does it not?' Balzac did not reply, but ceased laughing as if a spring had suddenly broken in him. He was very serious all the rest of the evening and uttered not another word on Russia."

That is Hoffenstein: *convulsive laughter*. Like Heine, he is a buffoon of the Absolute. His bitter irony is a sob of agony frozen to a glittering dirk in his brain.

If his work has the stuff of Heine, the man himself is straight out of Dostoievski. He is Russia: self-mockery, the Imp of the Perverse that squeezes the last drop of drama and comedy out of every contradiction in his own nature. He sweats guffaws while tottering under his cross. Hoffenstein might echo the cry of René Quinton, the war-glorifying sadist: "My malady is loving the human race!"

He is sheer artist. He is a lyrical, ironic genius of the first water. His first volume of poetry contains some of the most exquisite and mournful poetry of modern times. It is Chopin in ink. His two later volumes are Chopin turned Aristophanes. But the eternal Wail, the Kol Nidre, is always there, in his most trivial wisecrack, either in speech or from his pen.

He looks the harassed poet. There is no serenity in his being. His face depicts a Shelley who wrestles with Momus and Samson Belly. His conversation is a perfect thesaurus of wit—a Niagara of satire, out of a Devil's Whirlpool of Pain.

The early Hoffenstein was Samuel *at* the Wailing Wall. The later Hoffenstein is Samuel *on* the Wailing Wall—"with just one crucial button gone", as he says of another.

HEYWOOD BROUN

HEYWOOD BROUN is profoundly, and thus unconsciously, *the* American. I should call him a wabbly hundred percenter. Sometimes he registers ninety and sometimes (around election time) he shoots to one hundred and ten.

Not a patrioteer, not a Swollen Portent of Our Majesty Among the Nations of the World, mind you. Broun has none of these ritualistic trappings. But a little finger-prodding into his psyche may reveal him as One of Us from gizzard to *caput*: poker, blare, studied showmanship, lush-voiced sentimentality, good fellowship, uplift babbittry, Yankee shrewdness, picturized backwoods dowdiness, sly smoking-room sophistication, quest of the camera, pound-cake idealism, and the chicken in the pot, or the bacon comes home!

In gait, speech, looks and dress Broun would be spotted as an American on Mars. In a literary competition among the astral shades to come Broun would be also instantly recognized through his style as truly American: sugary satire, bodiless facility, editorial restraint, Quakerish fulminations, sophomoric self-consciousness, good breeding in the presence of rascals and a steady flow of treacle flavored with Volsteadized vinegar.

Personally, Broun—if you can catch his eye up out of the depths of an eternal soliloquy carried on, apparently, at the very navel of

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Wisdom—has a friendly charm, a conveniently rickety memory, a top-heavy, shuffling gait, an enchanting weakness of never being able to say No when he doesn't mean Yes, and a good-natured disarming drawl that poorly masks the lightning-stroke thoughts in his brain.

So, we see, in spite of his great fame and romantic tug at the feminine-hearted and headed of both sexes he remains just a man, like myself or Gifford Pinchot. His human sympathies are profound and genuine. This is proven by his almost total absence of creative intelligence or artistic powers. Heigh-ho! We cannot be all things! He is not a man who would break the heart of the world. Indeed, in the last election, when he ran for Congress, did he not do his damnedest to mend the Broken Heart of the World?

He was seen in bread-lines, in strikers' parades, clasping the neck of our human-all-too-human New York cops; and threatening with that devastating smile of his the Principalities and the Dominations of Capitalism.

This man Broun is no coward, for he submitted to arrest during this same campaign to Mend the Broken Heart of the World and walked forth into the free air of Forty-second street a martyred but unbroken man.

Heywood Broun is altogether, then, a great American Public Servant, eternally sounding the slogan of Robert Benchley: Service, *not* Self!

ERNEST BOYD

ERNEST BOYD's Latin name is *Persona Grata*. The daily lunches, dinners and midnight durbars of the New York Musæ are always opened with, "Is Ernest Boyd present?"

He is the loving-cup of the Arts. And those who drink from the depths of his wit, wisdom, anecdote, and e'en of his thumping barytone blasphemies go forth into the night with the belly of their minds filled a-plenty.

Boyd is a fine type—the finest I have ever met—of the cultivated, civilized Irish gentleman. Even in high wassail he never allows the subconscious Irisher to batter down the precious layer of conscious *politesse*. He is, indeed, the triumph of the Irishman over the Irisher.

In Boyd's case, the style is not the man. He is pronounced, decisive and, often, blood-curdling in his verbal opinions and judgements. He booms his edicts from abysmal lung-vales. I have seen him sweep Walt Whitman off Olympus with a single blow from his larynx between two ditties from *Patience*.

But his literary style gives no indication of the Dionysan and the heavily charged electronic Boyd. It is a style that is deft, sure, studied, low-spoken. His irony is coy. It is even shy at times. But it is always effective in entertaining value. His plea, for instance, for "constructive idleness" is a gem. In fact, he abounds in gems: the rapier, the bludgeon, the dirk he seldom or never uses.

The great satirist is a bushwhacker, a man who shoots at the enemy through a loop-hole. In his *Literary Blasphemies*, it is true, he cleared the decks for war against Byron, Whitman and some others. But it was a case of David trying to slay Goliath with spit-balls, of a very model of a modern literary Major-General trying to break a Hindenburg line. Ah! how the mice *will* nibble at the toenails of the Titans!

As his mind is a kind of melting-pot for all the books produced in the world, so is his house the cross-roads of Fame. The culture of two worlds, including Ford-Madox-Ford-Hueffer-Ford, has passed through the turnstile of his salon.

In appearance, Boyd sometimes looks like a Pre-Raphaelite Parnell, sometimes like the Victorian Shaw, and, again, sometimes like a Titian Nazarene. No one can ever make a mistake as to what preoccupies him: he is always Literature out for a lark.

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D. H. LAWRENCE: APOSTLE OF THE DARK GOD

by Alan Reynolds Thompson

"To me and to many thousands," writes Mr. Stephen Potter, his most recent admirer, "D. H. Lawrence is the greatest living writer of this generation, who has had the power, in a sense which separates him from all his contemporaries, to create a world."*

Though the admiration of the critics seems to have been somewhat damped by the posthumous publication of *The Virgin and the Gipsy*, this judgement is probably too moderately enthusiastic for some. Others would consider it wildly excessive. After his death Lawrence remains, as before, an object of controversy. But the time has come to attempt objective appraisal of his work.

Obviously much of it, particularly the later books, is such as to make one either accept him prayerfully as a prophet or dismiss him as a crank. The usual academic judgement makes him a man of one book—*Sons and Lovers*—and a few short stories. Fine as that novel is, it is written in the naturalist tradition of the nineties; and such a judgement implies that Lawrence was great when most derivative but absurd when most individual. On the other hand many literary persons, like the author of our opening quotation, admire him for his later work. It is possible to take middle ground; in such a book as *The Plumed Serpent*, which Mr. Potter considers the culmination of Lawrence's thought, to recognize extravagances of pseudo-mysticism, and at the same time to appreciate the intensity of emotion and imagination behind them.

Even those who like him least will admit his intensity. It becomes strikingly manifest when we compare Lawrence with other novelists. Galsworthy is admirable for objectivity, for urbane and graceful irony; but we feel that he can hold himself judicially aloof perhaps because he has never been immersed in life. (I state this not as a biographical fact, of course, but as an impression.) Wells can play with panaceas like a schoolboy because he never faces the stubbornness of reality. He seems, in comparison with Lawrence, the perennial adolescent. Lawrence writes from the bitterness of suffering and struggle; his concern is not the vicarious pain of a kindly nature at the sufferings of others, or the delight of an ingenious mind in mechanisms and speculation; it is the direct expression of experience. Such a writer, let his ideas be never so foolish, will always impress readers, and speak with unrivaled immediacy to some whose emotional attitudes coincide with his.

But intensity alone is merely the energy of a mind; its value must be judged by the ends toward which that energy is directed. "For the property of passion", said Coleridge in one of those *aperçus* which make his greatness as a critic, "is not to create, but to set in increased activity." And primarily we

* *D. H. Lawrence: A First Study* by Stephen Potter (Cape & Smith. $2.50)

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must judge Lawrence, as undoubtedly the world will finally judge him, by the ends he sought.

Mr. Potter helps us here with an emphatic if expressionistic statement of Lawrence's philosophy.

"It is an old way to divide the universe," he writes. "Body and spirit. Below and above.

"In the *Phaedrus* Plato speaks of the two halves as a team of two horses driven by a charioteer:

" 'The right-hand horse is upright and cleanly made, and has a lofty neck and an aquiline nose: his colour is white . . . he is a lover of honesty and modesty and temperance, and the follower of true glory. . . .

" 'Whereas the other is a crooked animal . . . he is flat faced and of a dark colour. . . .'

"The same two worlds, but the difference lies in which way the sympathy goes. . . . Sublime: lofty: exalted: enlightenment: climbing ever higher: *higher mammals*: *higher education*. . . . To Lawrence this imagery is the language of everything in the world he most hates.

"He reverses it, therefore. *Dark* comes in instead. Dark, dark, *endarkenment*, he would say. . . . He reverses Plato."

"He reverses Plato." That is positive enough, surely, and though like all generalizations it over-simplifies, it may be accepted. In general tendency Lawrence is a dualist like Plato, to the extent that he sees in our nature a clear division, the abstracting powers of reason on the one hand, together with the voluntary effort to bring those abstractions into actuality through conduct; and on the other hand the instinctive urges that are our heritage from our animal ancestry, and that rise in us from beneath the conscious level. He sees these two halves of our nature not as parts of a normally unified whole but as naturally and even properly antagonistic. He is no naïve naturalist, fancying the reconcilement of the two an easy matter; rather he is at one with the great religious seers of the past in realizing the depths and the bitterness of their conflict.

He is at one with them so far, but no farther! His values are inverted, Plato upside-down. He becomes an advocate, as it were, for the devil; he ranges himself with Nietzsche, who divided Greek thought into Dionysian and Apollonian, and espoused the former, cursing Socrates for blighting the flower of Nature with cold reason. We know where Lawrence stands: among the most violent of the rebels who for the past hundred and fifty years have been fighting to enthrone the subrational. And we understand his popularity with literary Bohemia.

This popularity leads, by the way, to interesting reflections on human inconsistency. The literary Bohemian, as a general rule, is either hostile or contemptuous toward writers who accept traditional ethics. Art, he says loftily, when talking of the traditionalist, has nothing to do with morals. Or he attacks the man with suggestions of nasty complexes, the result of "Puritanical" suppressions. Or, fortified by the pragmatists, he dismisses the traditional moral code as outworn anyway. At all events traditional morals, he feels, have no business in serious modern novels. But, curiously, this same Bohemian will praise Lawrence, whereas if there is anything obvious about Lawrence it is that he is strictly in the old English tradition—a consistent and persistent moralizer, a preacher, a writer who thinks so little of "art" and so much of his doctrines that he sacrifices the one to the others continuously and carelessly. But since his doctrines find favour with the literary Bohemian, the latter finds them perfectly consistent with genius!

The sensible attitude, it would seem, is to admit that since human nature is inevitably moral—in some fashion—and that since novels inevitably reflect the characters of their authors, a consideration of their principles is necessary to a rounded judgement.

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Even the studied objectivity of Flaubert or George Moore is a revelation, but with Lawrence the revelation is intentional. His puppets are his mouthpieces and his plots the but slightly altered song of himself. In a book like *Kangaroo*, for example, he scarcely attempts to conceal his identity with the hero; and in all the books the characters exist less in their own right than as parts of Lawrence or objects of his aversion. So obvious is this that Mr. Potter, who admires him, writes a psychic biography solely by means of quotations and synopses drawn chronologically from Lawrence's works. The resulting account is probably as accurate as the majority of our smart modern "lives".

We cannot, then, even if we would, evade Lawrence's principles. But I have no wish to leave them as an abstract generalization such as that he reverses Plato. Though he made attempts on occasion to theorize, his doctrines are significant only as part of his nature, manifested suggestively in his fictions. Their consistency is that of character rather than logic, and must be deduced from general impressions. From general impressions, in what special ways does his intensity most strikingly appear? Some would say, in an obsession with sex. The comment is certainly inevitable, as Mr. Potter, who would like to avoid it, admits. But as I review Lawrence's work another trait seems possibly more noticeable, at least more significant. It is rebellion.

People who knew him praise his generosity and friendliness, but what stands out in his writing is his animosity. He was fond of the word *love* but more of the feeling *hate*. Even his lovers love with much of hatred and little of kindliness; their amorousness is mixed with fear. He nursed his aversions through all his volumes. They were evidently the product of some deep-seated psychic malaise. They set him apart from ordinary men, among both cranks and prophets. Richard Aldington inclines to place Lawrence among the latter, and pleasantly calls him a great example of the English Heretic, a "true Anarchist, living outside human society, rejecting all its values, fiercely concentrated on his own values".

Let us note some of the "values" which he more particularly rejects. For one thing, he dislikes our modern industrial civilization, with its mechanized ugliness and repression of native spontaneity. He can never forget the hideous collieries of his childhood. In this aversion he is of course like most poetically-minded people, but it is his peculiarity that he devotes only passing attention to general economic or political problems, and has no interest in social programs. It is his distinction indeed that in our day of mass reforms he looks for salvation only in individuals. (This is doubtless what Aldington means by his anarchism.) But in seeking his saviours he rejects the rest.

In particular he rejects the strong complacent blond Saxon, the hero of ordinary tales. Sham! cries Lawrence; he has given himself over to false gods—such as Mammon—and denied his instincts! That denial is in fact the denial of the "Holy Ghost" within him; and it shall not be forgiven him by Lawrence. In contrast the Lawrence-hero is small, self-centered, and dark; a man who wants to be let alone and who obeys his lusts. He is, as Mr. Potter admits, "Lawrentiomorphic"; he is not happy, but he "lives".

What seems to Lawrence the mental perversion of sex is indeed the chief object of his hatred. As a result he attacks not only those who degrade sex by sniggering and uncleanness, but even the idealizers of love. These latter pervert the business of the body by meddling with their minds. Love, he feels, should be subliminal, animal-like:

> You must know sex in order to save it, your
> deepest self, from the rape
> of the itching mind and the mental self,
> with its pruriency always agape.

Male intellectualists are bad enough, but female bluestockings are to him, as they were to Strindberg, as a red rag to a bull.

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The reason is probably that Lawrence, like Strindberg, knew and feared their power over him. Hermione Roddice in *Women in Love* is a particularly unpleasant example. She starved her instincts by attempting to intellectualize them; she lusts less for sexual satisfaction, of which she is incapable, than for power over men; she wants to know, not to feel. On one occasion, to be sure, she does follow her instincts, and in a sadistic fury brought about by amorous frustration nearly brains her lover. But of course her instincts were perverted.

As has been suggested, this hatred of Lawrence's seems the result of fear—a continual fear of anything that might encroach upon his ego. Such a suggestion is speculative, but the hatred is so extraordinary that speculations are inevitable. Indeed the melodramatic methods of psycho-analysis are in Lawrence's case so tempting that we may safely prophesy their use soon in at least one "modern" biography. We need to remind ourselves that all such methods are unscientific and subjective. But one or two further suggestions seem justified by the intensely autobiographical nature of Lawrence's work.

Lawrence feared above all the loss of spiritual integrity. Probably the story in *Sons and Lovers* and the early poems is accurate: his emotional development in adolescence was nearly frustrated by the love of a clinging mother. One need not, however, call this the "Oedipus complex" or swallow Freud entire to understand how such an experience might lead to the fierce assertion of "maleness" and touchy egotism. If, as seems likely, Lawrence's later experiences with women reinforced his original bias, the dominant trend in his writing is comprehensible.

In this connection the parallel with Strindberg seems so striking as to deserve further extension.* Both men had literary genius; both had extraordinary emotional and imaginative sensibility. Both idolized their mothers, idealized women and were disillusioned, rebelled against their own bondage to love, and vociferated masculinity. In their books both sought to objectify and universalize personal difficulties. Strindberg, struggling against his desperate need of the impossible dream woman, turned general misogynist. Lawrence, with greater sanity and less violence, was content to hate only the intellectual.

Lawrence's personal aversions as a result became rationalized as parts of a doctrine, mixed with eccentric prejudice. His preference for dark men is either symbol or whimsy. His attack on the intellectual perversions of sex, on the other hand, contains much that is sound and subtle. His rationalizing activity, like that of the paranoiac, was immense and often admirable but never objective and impersonal. His ideas were not on this account wrong, of course, for one can be very far from agreement with him generally and yet applaud some of his prejudices. Certainly he was not sentimental like Sherwood Anderson, and always spoke his mind like a man.

But no one can rest happy in hatred, least of all a poet with a sensitive soul. One must have also his admirations. Of all Lawrence's books *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is, I suppose, most abhorrent to the conservative, considering its frequent use of indecent monosyllables, its celebration of adultery, and excessive delight in carnality. Yet here we find perhaps his nearest approach to normal love. In this late story he seemed to have worked free from that fear-born savagery that characterizes most of his lovers, for here there is something like tenderness as well as lust, and the lovers find that integration of body and spirit which should be the criterion of a normal life. But though Lawrence idealizes the result, doubts obtrude themselves.

These doubts do not concern themselves with the question of obscenity and pornography. Lawrence himself, in a pamphlet on

* The parallel was called to my attention by reading Mr. V. J. McGill's careful study, *August Strindberg, the Bedeviled Viking* (Brentano).

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the subject, indicates in characteristic excited style that he had a high moral aim in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Since the question is not fundamental we may take his word for it. What shocks one age may not shock another; and it may be a healthy thing for grown men to scribble in books what small boys scribble on walls. It is not such things, but a writer's general influence and tendency which are ethically important.

Again, we may well forego the charge that Lawrence's animality was perverse. Doctor Joseph Collins, who looked at literature a few years ago, had something to say on the subject. The doctor's glance at literature was amateurish enough, but he may well be an expert in psychiatry. The question is best left to the experts.

Our doubts concern Lawrence's objects of admiration. To the majority of men a successful sexual union, desirable as it may be, is not the end of a good life; it must by liberating the powers lead on to other ends. When Mr. Potter quotes Lawrence to the effect that sex should be "a consummation in darkness preparatory to a new journey towards consummation in spirit", we may heartily agree; but though of physical consummations there are a great plenty, the spiritual consummation is notable for its absence. Physical ecstasy is a door like Dunsany's Glittering Gate: it opens, not on heaven, but on emptiness.

But let us do Lawrence justice in the matter. Naturalist though he was, his naturalism was not the usual soft disintegration of the human into the animal, not the familiar sentimental disguising of animality by a pretended spirituality or art-worship. Lawrence cast scorn on the romantic dream of "going native" in the South Seas; and he had a virile delight in conflict which makes life vivid as well as hard, insisting on distinguishing civilized from savage, human from animal, as well as male from female. He is distinguished from the ordinary naturalistic primitivist, romantic or scientific, who without knowing it uses his head to worship his loins.

Lawrence knew what he was doing. He would have no truck with the sentimental idealists; he would away with mealy-mouthed hypocrisy, call things by their Anglo-Saxon names, and be true to his lower nature. His fierce assertion shows both energy and a clear mind. Yet since he could not rest in negations and hates, but had abjured the spirit of light, his need for affirmation led him inevitably to fantastic pseudo-mysticism. He had foresworn Apollo. The only course left was to prostrate himself before the dark god. But the dark god in his stark nakedness could not be worshipped comfortably by a poet, even though Lawrence attempted it; and he began to dress his idol. He was careful not to borrow plumes from the bright spirit, but gave the idol a sinister and lustrous coat pleasing to the aesthetic if not the moral sense—symbolically, the skin of a snake. His god could then appear fearful and strange and mystical. It is not surprising that he should find final embodiment in the bloody religion of a barbaric race. *The Plumed Serpent*, with its conversion of a civilized woman to love of a Mexican Indian and worship of Quetzalcoatl, is the result. The dualism of our nature is abandoned at length by extinction of light in darkness.

But deny the light of reason and control, and you deny humanity. As Lawrence admits, you cannot revert to savagery, or to the beasts. You are shut out of the sentient universe. The physical world is there, waiting. . . . The doctrine leads to death. One is reminded of another naturalist poet, similarly obsessed with sexuality and inclined to hate mankind—Robinson Jeffers. The almost insane violence of the latter's themes finds its recoil in a longing for the tomb. The expression of such a longing is familiar, but usually sentimental. With Jeffers it seems sincere, and it is certainly logical, the inevitable outcome of his pessimistic naturalism. Lawrence

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is less ruthless and consistent, for by mysticizing physical fulfilment into a religion he preserved his optimism.

So much for general principles. Important as these are, we must not overlook other literary qualities.

Lawrence was not a stylist. Artistry did not interest him, and although he had obvious powers of expression, he did not attempt to prune and polish. On the contrary he was content to get an effect simply by "harping". "She was there so small and light and accepting in his arms, like a child, and yet with such an insinuation of embrace, of infinite embrace, that he could not bear it, he could not stand. . . . Then for a few seconds he went utterly to sleep, asleep and sealed in the darkest sleep, utter, extreme oblivion." Yes indeed, he went to sleep; there is no doubt about it! But what of it? We might reasonably assume from so much shouting that the fact was of some importance, but we would be wrong. It is simply Lawrence's usual way of emphasizing the erotic excitement of his characters. He continually cries his characters' emotions at us; the general effect is of tension without adequate cause, and for less incandescent spirits than his, tiresome.

His narrative style tends to be either brutally abrupt and bald, or garrulous. At times, when his heaped repetitions develop a really crucial situation, he has power. But he repeats too often, exclaims too much; his fervour becomes as monotonous as the "final clinches" of screen lovers. In his rimed verse his versification is perfunctory and rough, his phrasing seldom memorable. Naturally he preferred free verse, in which negligence seems appropriate and spontaneity is less hampered. With Wordsworth's definition of poetry in mind, we may consider Lawrence's a good example of what might be called the *overflow* theory in practice. Lawrence, like Wordsworth, shows its faults, but he lacks Wordsworth's occasional sublimity.

His plots, like his style, are rambling and careless. He introduces characters only to drop them; he builds up situations of extreme emotionality, and they come to nothing; and at any time he engages in *longueurs* of discussion, as freely as Aldous Huxley but without the latter's wit or range, letting the story go hang. The plots are unimportant for him. In this, to be sure, he is like some great novelists, who are valued for their parts, not their wholes, and are great in spite of their lack of construction. But Lawrence offers us no such compensations.

He is praised for his description, and indeed he has a remarkable power of *Einfühlung, feeling* himself *into* surrounding nature, or reconstructing the alien life of a fish or a tortoise in its own terms. What distinguishes the descriptive passages in the novels seems to be chiefly his faculty for seeing nature as symbol or background for men's erotic needs. "The wood was silent, still and secret in the evening drizzle of rain, full of the mystery of eggs and half-open buds, half-unsheathed flowers. In the dimness of it all trees glistened naked and dark as if they had unclothed themselves, and the green things on earth seemed to hum with greenness." His fondness for repetition applies to certain words, as in this passage *secret, mystery*, and particularly *dark*. The effect is an emotional heightening that comes from suggestion and symbol, not the logical sense of the words; at times indeed his prose verges on unacknowledged free verse. The mystery of sex was doubtless to him incommunicable except by suggestion; but to the critical reader his practice at times seems merely uncontrolled emotionality.

The people of his books are seen little on the surface as "characters", and are usually, as has been said, projections of himself and his dislikes. It is rather in his analyses of emotional relationships of men and women —of what Mr. Potter calls the flow beneath the surface of social intercourse—that he manifests his power. We are constantly bidden look at the anatomy of impulse, or rather, its physiology. In support of his

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central belief in the instinctive Lawrence elaborated a physiology of nerve-centers, to correspond to the "polarities" of the "unconscious". The subliminal region, surprisingly enough, is not all sexual as Freud assumed; its centers are four nerve ganglia, front and back, abdomen and chest, each with its specific tendency toward acceptance or repulsion of the outer world. Here again we gladly leave Lawrence to the experts, merely recording our unscientific feeling that all this is either symbolism or twaddle. But at all events the scheme of bodily "polarities" serves him continually in his books: his men and women communicate, as Mr. Potter says, praising him for a new thing, with their whole body; they affect each other less by faces than by thighs and buttocks.

The result is undoubtedly, whether we like it or not, an important cause for his fame and his difficulty. His people do not act after the conventional patterns of fiction, or of life as we ordinary folk see it. They obey impulses not explained; they respond to mysterious magnetisms in each other's bodies that reason does not recognize; they take us out of the normal world into a distorted, elemental, savage region where we cannot make the accustomed emotional responses and are kept perplexed and frustrated. Yes, say the disciples, Lawrence has created a new world. It is an achievement of genius. But we may perhaps still be sceptical. Granting the novelty of the creation, we may still doubt its value. The dark god is by definition irrational and indefinable; his doings, as recorded by Lawrence, are not therefore necessarily the product of a higher insight. The subliminal uprushes of Lawrence's characters may be the intuitions of a seer; they may also be the phantasies of a romantic dreamer with a psychosis. They may indeed throw light less on the character than on Lawrence. Shakespeare, in the sleep-walking scene, wrote a masterpiece of objective insight into other minds. In Lawrence's works can we find a single similar scene? Do we ever really look into the mind of anybody but Lawrence?

The narrowness of Lawrence's interests is noteworthy. Even his treatment of sex is narrow. Love between parents and children is seldom described and usually perverse. Of course that idealizing of the loved object which is the age-old activity of normal poetic spirits is to him anathema. For one who talks so much of living the instinctive life Lawrence shows a surprising lack of interest in those instincts connected with sex which lead a man to desire a family, to cherish as well as lust after a woman, to adore his children. And for one who seeks "fulfilment" so ardently, he seems totally to overlook the fact that normal women feel their lives unfulfilled unless they have had, not lovers, but babies.

And in certain general qualities usual in great writers he is deficient. In the travel books and free-verse poems he seems more at ease and objective than in the novels, and at times is even whimsical. But the whimsical mood is not characteristic, and in the major works his intense preoccupation shuts out more of humour than occasional bitter sarcasm. And he is of course not interested in the world of the intellect. He can report the chatter of "intellectuals" about the latest things in art and science; but his attitude toward all such chatter is contemptuous. The talk of serious thinkers he seems not to know at all. To him, as to Ursula Brangwen at college, the world of books and speculation is unreal, and its inhabitants not quite alive. Incapable of impersonal thought, he could not understand it. We are reminded of a comment of Santayana on Browning. "Browning's hero," he writes, "because he has loved intensely, says that he has lived; he would be right, if the significance of life were to be measured by the intensity of the feeling it contained, and if intelligence were not the highest form of vitality." To Lawrence intelligence, instead of being the highest form of vitality, is its enemy.

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But let us close by recalling Lawrence's achievements. He was by nature passionate, sensitive, imaginative. Early experience seemingly fixed in him a permanent dread of being absorbed by "smother love". He rebelled therefore against all apparent causes of frustration, and desperately sought manhood and integrity, hitting right and left against what seemed to him their enemies. He thought he found salvation in abandonment to sexual instinct. This abandonment led him to subtle psychological analyses of himself and to a pseudo-mystical worship of the dark god of primitive instinct. It enabled him to throw over his wordy and otherwise tiresome tales an atmosphere of feverish passion. And it made him a prophet for those of our time who, as W. C. Brownell has put it, think themselves emancipated but are only unbuttoned.

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ESSAYS IN GRAMMAR

III. PARTING FROM THE PARTS OF SPEECH

by Janet Rankin Aiken

IF ANYONE should ask you what grammar —English grammar—is about, ten to one you will reply, "the parts of speech". If you are under twenty years old, you might go so far as to say "the eight parts of speech". If you are under fifteen, you might be able to name the eight. Otherwise probably not. For many years now, these eight parts of speech have gone their untroubled way, constituting English grammar in the minds of countless children and teachers, and vaguely symbolizing the awful genius of grammar to the rest of us. They are as established as the multiplication table or the alphabet, with which they may fitly be compared. In the upper reaches of our rudely iconoclastic world of modern scholarship whispers have arisen, whispers against these simple idols of our childhood days. We are told (first by Bertrand Russell, I believe) that there is a happy land where the multiplication table is not so, and hence does not exist. We are told by any expert you may name that our English alphabet is nothing but an illogical jumble of ill-assorted and disarranged symbols, which fail ignominiously to represent truly the actual sounds we use in speech. And we shall even hear, if we listen hard enough, rumblings and mutterings which may in time blow up the parts of speech. The senior grammatical expert, who by the way is called a linguist rather than a grammarian, talks about something called functional grammar, in which the parts of speech will either disappear or suffer a sea-change.

English speech is a pattern of pieces put together in every conceivable way. There are, however, only five different pieces in this pattern. We call them the sentence, the non-sentence, the clause, the phrase, and the word. All you may say or write can be analyzed into some one of the multitudinous possible combinations of these five pieces or units of speech. Of these five speech units, four—sentence, clause, phrase, and word—probably look familiar. The fifth, the non-sentence, is simply a communication made without using the sentence form. The name on a card or a shop-window, the "Hello" or "Good-morning" with which you greet a friend, the "yes" or "no" with which you answer a question, the heading on a letter, all are non-sentences. They communicate, but not by means of the sentence. Intimate or relaxed conversation is very largely made up of non-sentences. Of course the sentence and the non-sentence stand alone, apart from the other three units, as communicators. Their function is to tell someone something, and, since they are independent units, we say that they perform the absolute function. They act only in relation to each other, not in relation to the words, phrases, and clauses which compose them.

But what of words, phrases, and clauses themselves? What work or functions may

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they perform? First and most essential, we have the verb-function, as the core or hub of the sentence mechanism. As its Latin derivation tells us, the verb is the word. It is the action or assertion, the central fact of the message we are making into a speech pattern. An action or assertion cannot exist in a void. It must have a performer or originator, and often it will have also a person or thing which undergoes or experiences the action or assertion. The first is the subject, the second the object or complement of the verb.

To have a sentence at all, we must have subject and verb. A command like *go* is not properly a sentence; indeed, a distinguished German linguist has even expressed a doubt whether the imperative verb is really a verb at all, since it does not express action but merely desire for action or incitement toward action. The simplest sentence consists of subject and verb, as *birds fly, I see, John eats.* The next simplest pattern contains subject, verb, and complement, as *boys fly kites, I see a house, John is a boy.* These three, subject, verb, and complement, are the three main or primary speech functions of English. Besides them, sentences often contain modifiers, such as *good* and *high* in *good boys fly kites high,* and connectives, such as *and* and *to* in *John and James will go to the party.* That's all. There are no other speech functions in English. If we count up we shall find six functions to go with our five units of speech. The six functions of English are the absolute, verb, subject, complement, modifiers, and connective. That's all there are. Every unit used in any English speech pattern performs one or another of these functions.

And now where do our eight parts of English speech come in? One, the verb, comes in whole. The others are all torn apart or pieced together in the new arrangement.

Take first of all the noun. Now the noun may be subject, complement, or modifier. It performs no one function. It is therefore cut up into three, and distributed among these three functions.

The pronoun is in the same boat. It too does sometimes one job, and sometimes another. It follows the noun into the three groups—subject, complement, and modifier.

The adjective and the adverb are just two types of the modifier, and, as I confessed in the June BOOKMAN, it is occasionally beyond my feeble powers to tell t'other from which. These two parts of speech are thrown together into the modifier group. A like fate happens to the preposition and the conjunction, both of which do the work of connecting.

And so we have left only the interjection, which as the expression of an emotional state is a complete communication in itself, and therefore constitutes a non-sentence, in the absolute function.

Functional grammar thus involves a redistribution of the eight parts of speech according to the work they do within the sentence as a whole. The work done by the word, phrase, or clause is the important thing. No longer is a word by nature a noun or an adjective or a preposition. The same word may hop from one function to another with perfect freedom. Take as an example the word *freezing* in these five sentences:

1. Freezing is a method of preserving.
2. Freezing meats preserves them.
3. Freezing water expands rapidly.
4. Freezing! I should say not!
5. We talked of freezing as a preservative.

Four different functions are performed here by this single little word. In the first example it is a subject, but not in the second. In sentence two the subject is *freezing meats,* and *freezing* by itself is a verb. Next we have *freezing* as a modifier, and fourth as an absolute, a non-sentence. Finally, *freezing* is found as a complement, the object of the connective *of.*

In Latin the parts of speech stay put, but not in Modern English, where change is almost their law. Literally there is no word in Modern English which will not fit into at least three of our six functions, for any word

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at all may be used as a subject by the simple device of saying something about it; all words have possible use as modifiers, and any word at all may be made into an exclamation (absolute function).

This points to one advantage of the functional plan of English grammar. It is truer to the facts of our speech than is the parts-of-speech system. It allows for what is called functional shift, that is, the shifting of words from one function to another. It is also simpler than the older system. It does away with the fictitious distinction between noun and pronoun, of which I shall venture to say something more at length later on. It ingeniously pulls the teeth of the relative pronoun, that bugbear of every victim of formal grammar. It consists in essence simply of five speech units doing six different kinds of work in communication.

How soon, or how far, this functional grammar may succeed in supplanting the parts of speech I do not know. All I am sure of is that traditional grammar needs supplanting in very many ways, and that I for one am all in favour of a new system which will be simpler and truer to the facts of speech.

And then as I write I remember last Friday night, when six teachers of elementary grammar assembled, at my instance, to discuss this matter of functional grammar. These were people of intelligence and some learning, and for four mortal hours they united in jumping on functional grammar and all its works. It might do for experts, said they in effect; it might be true as true; but it would never do for them to teach. Why, how could children taught functional grammar pass their college entrance examinations?

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UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE

III. A NEW COLLEGE IN THE MODERN UNIVERSITY

by Robert Shafer

In his volume of essays and addresses, *The Liberal College*, Dr. Alexander Meiklejohn wrote some years ago: "We are just emerging from a period in which the college has been regarded as a part of the university and has been identified with the whole in essential attitude and spirit. But the day of that confusion is rapidly closing". Dr. Meiklejohn was, not for the first or the last time, unduly optimistic. Yet he had his eye on facts of the utmost interest to every student of American higher education. For the general movement described in my last paper was at no time entirely unopposed, and it finally provoked a definite counter-movement designed to save the undergraduate college from the destruction which so evidently threatened it. This counter-movement, though definite, has been largely unconcerted, and has been in a number of cases the outcome of a desire to save a particular institution, rather than of a concern for a particular kind of education. "If we don't do something, boys, for dear old So-and-So, where we spent the happiest years of our lives, the grand old college is going on the rocks. It's rocks or dough, fellows, that's straight. Prexy says. . . ." "Gentlemen, I tell you solemnly, it is the writing on the wall. We must convince the great public that Blub-Blub offers unique opportunities to the youth of our land—opportunities that no university can duplicate—opportunities, contacts, an atmosphere, a warmly sympathetic individual attention, always alert and watchful, yet never obtrusive, never failing in discretion;—in short; gentlemen, we must convince the great public that Blub-Blub offers to aspiring youth a wisely directed freedom, in comfortable surroundings, in close and intimate contact with representatives of some of our oldest and most influential families, such as can only be achieved in a small college. If we should fail in this duty, gentlemen, our ancient college, the kindly mother of many children, founded in 1819 by that devoted band of God-fearing pioneers, some of whose faces still live and even now look down upon you from the painted canvas. . . . But we must not, we will not fail. This college has an enduring mission, which has only been intensified by the godless University of Fizz-Bizz."

In the circumstances—though not all, to be sure, are adumbrated by these appeals—it is not surprising that the effort to save the college should have exhibited rather the tenacity with which institutions cling to life than any developments primarily interesting from the point of view of education. Yet ideas are hard to come by; and if once one is fairly caught, its shadow is likely to spread far. Hence it is that underneath the variety and confusion of this counter-movement one can discern symptoms not only of unity, but of a common attempt to make the college once more the home of liberal education.

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How far this attempt is conscious it is impossible to say. Comparatively few members of faculties seem nowadays to know the meaning of "liberal" when it qualifies education. The vulgar notion that it signifies "useless learning" would strike many of them as accurate, though they might, of course, recognize that more would have to be said for a complete definition. And even the most capable and thoughtful men are likely to be confused when they approach this subject. Professor L. B. Richardson, for example, in his painstaking and valuable *Study of the Liberal College*, prints these two statements, on successive pages:

> The college of liberal arts is an institution with a perfectly definite purpose—that of arousing the intellectual curiosity of the youths under its charge. (Page 258.)

> After all, is not the main purpose of liberal education the establishment in the mind of him who studies a proper *sense of the relationship* of the branches of knowledge, and the *unity* of knowledge as a whole? (Page 259.)

The first statement expresses a worthy purpose. The second, in our time, raises questions; because science points to nothing so definitely as to a pluralism which it is helpless to resolve—on which, in fact, its development depends. However, if Professor Richardson's question is to be taken, as the context suggests, simply to mean that students should be made aware of the artificiality of our divisions and subdivisions of the field of knowledge, into departments and "courses", this too is an unexceptionable, an important object; and it will be agreed that both purposes should be achieved in a successful liberal education. But the two purposes are not identical; they cannot each be "the main purpose". And neither of them is, in fact, more than an incidental benefit to be expected from liberal education.

It is quite clear, indeed, that Professor Richardson was hazily groping for a satisfactory definition which our present organization of studies nowhere suggests. His constructive proposals are, it seems to me, an extraordinarily mixed lot, sufficiently demonstrating in themselves the impossibility of reforming our colleges as they now are into institutions of liberal study. But amongst them is one which has been taken up in a great many colleges in recent years, and which is in some danger now of being regarded, not exactly as a panacea, but as an easy way of pacifying critics. This is the so-called honours course. By 1925 such courses had been established in 93 colleges, and the number at that time appeared to be rapidly increasing.* A very large majority (75 in 1925) simply impose additional work to be completed by candidates for special honours. The only interesting change made by these colleges, accordingly, lies in their bare recognition that they have a responsibility, with respect to their best students, which they are not fulfilling through the course of study hitherto provided. It cannot be said that they are meeting the responsibility merely by adding more of the same thing.

The case is different, however, with the minority (18 in 1925) where candidates for special honours, usually at the conclusion of their second year in college, are excused from the ordinary requirements and classes, and—to quote President Aydelotte—enter "a special honours course, based not on the quantitative credit-hour system, but more upon the English plan of individual work through a period of . . . two years in preparation for a group of comprehensive examinations. . . . There is nearly everywhere provision for giving them individual supervision and instruction. . . . The honours student has his work outlined for him not in terms of what he must do but in terms of what he must know. Instead of taking courses he studies a subject. He must (with what assistance he can get)

* *Honours Courses in American Colleges and Universities*, by President Frank Aydelotte. Second Ed., Rev. Bulletin of the National Research Council, Vol. 10, Pt. 2, No. 52 (April, 1925).

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organize his materials, set his own tasks, find out and strengthen his own weaknesses, develop his own strong points, and, in general, take the responsibility for his own salvation". In at least two colleges, moreover—Swarthmore and Wells—salvation depends upon the verdict of examiners drawn "from outside the institution who have had no connection with the teaching".*

Evidently this plan of study is bound to be liberalizing in important ways. It places a real responsibility on the student which demands constantly through a long period the exercise of judgement. Mistakes will be made, time will be wasted, says some wiseacre. Exactly. And only through the opportunity to make mistakes will students, if they are capable of learning at all, come to avoid them intelligently, to order their time sensibly, to work responsibly, to develop into capable, thoughtful men and women. Further, the supervision required by this plan is most likely to assume the form of criticism, and the give-and-take of critical discussion must itself valuably help to educate the judgement. Thus the different elements of the plan each reinforces the natural effect of the others—the final comprehensive test giving a seriousness to the whole course not otherwise attainable. It emphasizes, most strongly, the fact that knowledge, not the performance of a routine, is essential to success; while it also emphasizes the fact that the course of study is an organic whole, closely related in its parts, none of which can be got up and disposed of in isolation from the others. The plan, finally, has the great virtue—from the viewpoint of liberal education—of strongly impelling several departments to come together in the construction of a unified course which includes the artificially narrowed fields of each.

The contrast this affords with methods of undergraduate instruction now prevalent can scarcely be appreciated save by those in the know. It must be added, however, that the honours course is not likely to make for itself a real place in our colleges. It has attracted much attention and attained a certain prestige which has brought a considerable number of institutions to establish something to which they might give the name. Doubtless it is a benefit that these institutions have thus been forced into acknowledging that their normal course of study is suitable only for mediocre students. But real honours courses have been set up, as was said above, in only a few colleges; and in some, at least, of these they have come into being not because of any change of heart or dissatisfaction with the existing state of affairs felt generally by the faculty, but because of the pertinacious insistence of one or two teachers or administrators. In these instances the reluctant consent of the majority was finally given in order to be rid of the question, and partly because of the conviction that the plan would kill itself in operation. It is consequently the less surprising that, where real honours courses exist, they have attracted but few students. The honours to be won are thought to be empty. They do not have the powerful support of keen public interest, or that which would be afforded by their definitely opening the way to some valued career; and when in addition they are tacitly or even openly disparaged by members of the faculty, students are likely to conclude that "college life" in its fulness is preferable. No figures are available, but from private inquiry I hazard the guess that not more than two percent of the students in the eighteen colleges with real honours courses have hitherto taken advantage of the opportunity offered them. Everything that an observer from a distance can learn goes to indicate that the honours work at Swarthmore is a genuine success; but everything that can be learned equally suggests that this success is not likely soon to be duplicated in more than one or two other institutions.

* Whether or not this is an unmixed good is disputable; but there can be no doubt that all examinations should be made an institutional responsibility with some members of the board drawn from outside the college.

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On the other hand, the four-course plan at Princeton, which is only a timid and half-hearted approach to the plan of study embodied in real honours courses, seems to be firmly established and to be yielding the benefits expected from it, some of which are, as far as they go, genuinely liberalizing. And this success seems to be due, not at all to the fact that the plan is a timid compromise, but to the fact that it is not optional. Experience at Princeton, in other words, suggests that the weakness of honours courses lies not in the plan of study they embody, but largely in the ill-judged attempt to give them a place and sanction in the college such as they have in England, but decidedly unsuitable to present conditions in America. I say "largely", because there is another important factor. Throughout education the crucial point is the teacher. Dr. Meiklejohn told the truth exactly when he wrote: "There is nothing more futile than the attempt to teach liberal culture by means of teachers who are not liberally educated".* Yet that is what, for the most part, when we make the attempt at all, we now do. But nothing can be clearer than the fundamental fact that if liberal education is to become a real possibility in America we shall have to make our teachers as we go. It is a grave but not insoluble problem. The same necessity arose during the Renaissance, and was met. It can be met again;—though I venture to think that it cannot be met by the importation of missionaries from Oxford.

Even at Swarthmore and at Princeton, however, though real progress is being made towards the integration of work, the irreducible evils of the elective system remain—and elsewhere those evils are magnified. The free-elective system as it once flourished at Harvard and thence spread through the country has practically disappeared from the undergraduate college. Few things could be more soberly instructive than the contrast between President Eliot's complacent satisfaction with this system, as late as 1908,* when his *University Administration* was published, and the disastrous experience of its effects which had caused its abandonment everywhere even before his death. It must be said, however, that talk about abandonment of the system is often misleading. Eliot pointed out in *University Administration* that freedom of choice, though designed to be complete, was in practice restricted from the beginning at Harvard, because advanced "courses" could not be elected unless the appropriate elementary "courses" had previously been taken. The general rule now is that the "courses" of the first two years are largely prescribed, with a small number of alternatives provided to allow both for variations in the preparatory course and for free entrance to all the "majors" of the last two years. And in these years students are required to elect a number of "courses" falling within some one department. This constitutes the "major" subject, and may comprise—so various are the regulations of different colleges—any number from one-fourth to three-fourths of all the student's upperclass "courses". The remainder may be freely elected as fancy may dictate, subject only to the restriction that certain advanced "courses" may not be chosen without due preparation for them. The plan is designed to ensure a minimal coherence of the total course of study, and also a considerable acquaintance with some one subject. The subject, however, may be anything or nothing—psychology, classics, English literature, geology, art and archaeology, mathematics, anthropology, sociology, what not—and in no two institutions is the list of departments likely to be just the same or, at any rate, to mean just the same things. In some colleges a strenuous effort has been

* *The Liberal College*, p. 165.

* As late as 1930 the venerable Professor George Herbert Palmer went even further than, as far as I know, Eliot ever went in support of the elective system. In his article in *Contemporary American Philosophy* he unequivocally claimed divine sanction for it: "Our Father in heaven had been using the elective system long before we discovered it."

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made to keep the number of departments down, and, likewise, to keep down the number of "courses" offered by each department. In others, the greater number, an uncontrolled ambition has apparently prevailed to multiply departments and "courses" to the utmost. Equally in either case, however, a very considerable amount of free election remains the rule, and with it, as a necessary accompaniment, the credit-hour system. Hence it can only be said that the free-elective system has everywhere been more or less modified, and shorn of some of its worst possibilities.

That the change is real and important I should be the last to deny, but it is equally important to understand just what it comes to. It is simply an effort to compel students to derive from the elective system those benefits which it was originally designed to produce. The breakdown of the American high school—under an impossible weight of numbers, politics, and teachers from the schools of education—floods the colleges with helpless, lazy, ignorant youths, scandalously unprepared for further education. Hence the first two years of the modern college course are largely consumed in an attempt to make good the deficiencies of the lower schools. But the vast majority of students at the end of their second year in college are still almost completely unfitted to enter into the university work of their third and fourth years. Their teaching hitherto has been of the kind designed for children, and if it has succeeded in nothing else it has at least succeeded in preserving in them beyond the due time the intellectual and moral qualities of children. Chiefly their desire is just to get through college, obtaining, if possible, some easy vocational training on the way. And of course they all are after "college life"; and a considerable number hope to form advantageous social connections. Hence it has become necessary to impose the requirement of a "major" subject in order to prevent the aimless dissipation of the upperclass years, and to force the student's program into conformity with the university ideal of specialism. But the "major" subject is freely elected by the student, just as are individual "courses"—and it may be, as was said above, almost anything. Moreover, in view of the fact that the college—though identified as closely as possible in the upperclass years with the university—is still *called* an institution of liberal study, and in view of the fact that liberal education is *general* education, the opposite of specialism, it is also required that the "courses" chosen beyond those necessary to constitute a "major" be scattered in other fields of study. The idea long prevailed in some quarters, of course, that a gentleman was one with a varied range of accomplishments not possible to a "professional"—the latter being compelled, in order to attain the requisite skill in some one activity, to sacrifice everything else. This idea resulted from a process of degeneration, not unusual in the sphere of ideas, from the Renaissance conception of the gentleman. And it was but a short step from it to the identification of the gentleman with the dilettante; from which in turn arose our present-day requirement that every college graduate must be a smatterer as well as a beginning specialist.

The outcome is not a liberal education. Yet the modified elective system demanded some notice here because, though changes have been made for various reasons in pursuance of the attempt to please everybody a little, some of the changes have been motivated by the desire to make the American college again an institution of liberal study. And in a few colleges, probably not so many as a dozen, where modification has gone furthest and has been accompanied by radical changes in methods of study, intelligently designed to place responsibility where it belongs, some at least of the students are actually securing important elements in a liberal education. But even in these institutions, and in the vast majority much more, the unescapable evils of the elective system vitiate whatever

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is attempted. Free election in the university —that is, freedom of choice in the pursuit of medicine, law, or any of the subjects offered for study in what is now called the graduate school—is natural, necessary, and good. But free election, whether of subjects or of "courses", in the liberal college is an anomaly which at once opens the door to the confusion and failure discussed in my earlier papers.

Dr. Flexner, to be sure, and many with him, think they think otherwise. It is very difficult, in attempting to state it, to be sure that one does full justice to the position of Dr. Flexner, whom I select as altogether the best representative of this view. The difficulty perhaps arises from the ambiguous nature of the view itself; but, at any rate, Dr. Flexner's idea is, not that any subject, but that any "important" or "valuable" subject, studied, not with the object of acquiring a technique for practical use, but for its own sake, is genuinely liberalizing. And certainly this may be true—so true that one may go further, as others do, and as indeed one must, if one goes this far. I have admitted in my last paper that any hobby, that golf, or even philately, if pursued for its own sake, may be genuinely liberalizing. It cannot be denied. But can it be liberalizing enough? That, of course, is the real question. Will stamp-collecting, if carried to its utmost extremity, reward its devoted victim with a liberal education?

Dr. Flexner would have answered "Yes" eight years ago when he published *A Modern College*. The argument in that monograph was masked by its application to "useful subjects", but it fits the case. "There are nowadays many types of cultivation," Dr. Flexner wrote; "there is no way of arranging them serially on the basis of a relative importance; in a world in which all are essential, nothing is to be gained by the attempt." And, suitably to the particular aspect of the subject then engaging him, he quoted Burton of Chicago as one who was successfully engaged in resolving "the old antithesis between bread and butter education and education of the cultural type". "'It has long been a favourite theory of mine,' says Professor Burton, 'that agriculture could be made one of the most cultural in the whole range of studies, and an agricultural school a centre of a very high type of culture. . . . But if this is true of agriculture, is it not also true of many other occupations?'"

"It has long been a favourite theory of mine . . ." Yes, it is fatally easy to indulge in day-dreams of this type. The just not impossible college!—more usually, the just not impossible she! But certainly, if the dream-college of agriculture ever became an embodied fact, its work would be enormously wasteful, and it would resemble the kind of elementary school of which, as Dr. Flexner somewhere tells, one pupil complained to his father, saying: "At that school they don't really work when they work, and they don't really play when they play". I do not say that the dream is utterly chimerical. It is in fact possible that our philatelist, for example, would be led on to the study of inks and papers, and thence to chemistry; would be led on to the study of engraving and printing processes, and thence to physics; and would be led on to the study of the history of the post office, and thence to political and social history; and perhaps to the history of writing, and so ultimately into archaeology. Languages, also, not a paltry two or three, but dozens, might be learned as a necessary means of coming to know the stamps expertly and of following out the inquiries suggested by them. And it is possible that our philatelist might be led in time to reflect, seriously, systematically, and fruitfully, upon the meaning of his varied knowledge, and so might come to be liberally educated.

But is this likely? Is it not rather true—and true from the necessity of the case—that as we have with the growth of specialism multiplied subjects and "courses" in the college, we have progressively narrowed

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them, taking pains to avoid overlapping, so that the character of our studies has grown more and more opposed to the kind Burton dreamed of? We fancy any subject can be made "cultural"; hence we admit every subject to the curriculum with the intention of suiting everybody—and find that actually we have brought about the disintegration of the college and, worse, have made it a source of infection spreading disease to every part of the university. President Macmillan tells of a "visitor from overseas, here to study our educational methods", who "reported on his departure that there were two things in particular that had impressed him. The first was the great amount of attention we give to the opinions and wishes of our students, and the other how little we do for them". Acknowledging the justice of this comment, President Macmillan adds that "of course there is a causal relation between the two. We are tremendously concerned about what the students wish, make love to them all the time, and give them practically all they ask for, whereas if we knew our business we ought to lay before them a program vastly superior to anything they can propose".*

This is obviously true, and Dr. Flexner now agrees with it whole-heartedly; yet at the same time he still insists, not that any subject, but that any "important" or "valuable" subject studied for its own sake is not only liberalizing, but sufficiently so to afford an adequate liberal education. He does not tell us, though, how one is to distinguish an "important" subject from an unimportant one, nor how the study of economics, for example, or of geology, will of itself flower into a liberal education. And he does not because in fact he cannot. This is indeed the grave weakness of his excellent book, as it is the weakness of his earlier work. And it is just the weakness to be expected in one who was himself trained up by the methods of German higher education and who has given the German university system his unqualified and uncritical approval. For the Germans have tended to secure a high level of expertness in all of the sciences—and this of course is a very important achievement—but they have purchased it at the expense of their humanity. It was notorious in the early years of the present century that Germans seemed to be as deficient in common sense as they were expert in science and exact scholarship, and it was almost as generally recognized that this one-sidedness had begun seriously to undermine the universities. A sound sense of values was being lost, work was becoming increasingly trivial in quality, and the only important factor in much of it was its correctness of method. In other words, until everything was suddenly altered by the profound shock of war, it seemed evident that the German universities were following essentially the same downward path that our own have followed—and for the same reason. Many conditions in the two countries were different, so that a superficial or prejudiced observer might easily be deceived; but the serious decline of German scientific and scholarly work was a matter of common talk and of grave concern amongst American apostles of *Wissenschaft* during the ten years preceding 1914; and concerning the fact there is ample proof in many of our university libraries, in German dissertations published during that period.

And evidently decline had set in, in both countries, for the reason mentioned in my last paper in the discussion of *Wissenschaft*. *Wissenschaft* includes as of its essence a rigorous specialism, or it is nothing. But this means that it cannot develop from itself general standards of value. Science and scholarship in their several divisions can and do develop standards governing methods, or techniques—but this is something very different, which provides no safeguards against triviality. On the contrary, to judge from experience, this limitation actively encourages the descent to triviality. And it also does

* Article in *The Effective College*, edited by R. L. Kelly, 1928.

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something far worse. The specialist *qua* specialist is the willing slave of his subject, binding himself wholly to its service and following whithersoever it leads. But thus inevitably he will become transformed. In so far as he is a mere specialist he will become a missionary, a propagandist, and he will, with the deepest conviction and the best of intentions, begin to judge all things solely from the angle of his specialized knowledge, and by its standards, which were devised for an entirely different purpose and have no validity beyond the rigidly delimited sphere and purpose for which they were devised.* This is the consequence predicted by Mark Pattison in his essay on *Oxford Studies*. "If you are not prepared", Pattison wrote, "with the true and all-comprehensive method, you must expect to see a partial, hasty, one-sided, superficial philosophy spring up; for philosophy there will be, if there is knowledge at all." The prediction has been abundantly, cruelly fulfilled; and it has been fulfilled not only in such flourishing phenomena as Menckenism, and the cheap philosophy of some of our weekly reviews, and the New Thought—one of whose leaders seriously promises to "make us all Dollarative where we were merely Centsitive before"—but, far more disquietingly, it has been fulfilled in our universities. And the truth is that the more thorough our specialism becomes, the more certain are we to have in the persons of our most deeply dyed specialists a race of bigots and quacks.

Dr. Flexner is not now blind to this truth —it is precisely the burden of his *Universities* that "a sound sense of values has not been preserved within American universities"—and he admirably provides a place for the philosophic critic in his ideal university, and recognizes that for the sake of science itself, for the sake of specialism itself, and those useful things the expert can do for us, quite as much as for our own sakes, we need liberal education. But how it is to be obtained he has really no idea. What he primarily values is expertness, and what he really knows is how to secure it and maintain it—and this is excellent—but concerning the liberal education without which expertness is bound in the end to be a curse he is hazy, inconsistent, jejune. He says glibly that the cure for the diseases of specialization is more specialization, like the people who say that the cure for a sick democracy is more democracy. He thinks the liberally educated man is practically identical with the cultivated man, and points out—what in itself is true, and a truth much in need of emphasis today—that many things cannot be directly taught, and that for cultivated men we need more homes which are centres of cultivation and more actively cultural influences in our communities. He thus thinks a liberal education will tend to take care of itself, will come of itself, as our high schools are gradually improved, and as the influences of home and community gradually become better, and as the mind is more rigorously trained in the better universities we so badly need. He falls back, indeed, repeatedly in *Universities* on the theory that the mind is made an efficient instrument for general purposes by the discipline of specialized study, whatever the subject. There is some truth in this, but not enough to prevent it from being what Professor Whitehead calls it,* "one of the most fatal, erroneous, and dangerous conceptions ever introduced into the theory of education". It deserves this condemnation because it requires that the mind be conceived as a passive instrument which may be sharpened for future use, like a knife. But, as Professor Whitehead says, "the mind is never passive; it is a perpetual activity, delicate, receptive, responsive to stimulus. You cannot postpone its life until you have sharpened it".

* No man forgets his original trade: the rights of nations, and of kings, sink into questions of grammar, if grammarians discuss them.—*Dr. Johnson.*

A professor of sociology in one of our largest and most highly developed universities once stated in my presence that higher education was, in his opinion, primarily an opportunity for the spread of propagandas.

* In *The Aims of Education and Other Essays*, 1929.

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And this means that it makes a vital difference *what* is taught, as well as *how* it is taught, and that there is always a best subject or group of subjects for any given purpose. If we cannot find the best subject, that is probably because we have not been sufficiently concerned to define the purpose.

I think manifestly this is the case with Dr. Flexner; and full support for this conclusion could be derived, were it necessary, from his own earlier writings, in which he has consistently taken the position that choice of the right subject-matter is of fundamental importance, for all those purposes with which he has seriously been concerned. His strength and weakness appear startlingly, in fact, in one passage in his *Universities* where he lays bare his real interest and shows to what point it leads him. His admiration for Oxford and Cambridge men is both discriminating and generous. They are "cultivated gentlemen", he says, "who can think and write and act, and who have thus far been singularly adequate to the practical situations in which the Englishman with his far-flung interests sooner or later finds himself. Thus they have made the men who have created the provincial universities, who have governed England and the Dominions honestly, efficiently, and like gentlemen. And these men are distinguished by the possession of a certain sanity, which, to be sure, may in part be the product of social and political experience, but is assuredly in part due to the type of education that the English receive in school and college". Nevertheless, he thinks that Oxford and Cambridge are mistaken in their aim. The type of education which produces these admirable men is centered, he says, upon "the formation of character", and he "wonders, not whether character and manners are unimportant, but whether, like cleanliness or clear speech, they may not now be more or less taken for granted. Persistent emphasis on what has been so strongly established as to be an obvious, essential, and characteristic national trait tends to distract attention from something else—the increased need of intelligence in the affairs of life—personal, political, social, economic".

I shall not waste words over the extraordinary naïveté of this. Goldsmith, who could think, though he could not act wisely, was far nearer the truth when he wrote: "It is easy to be a deep geometrician, or a sublime astronomer, but very difficult to be a good man". That, indeed, the formation of character can never be taken for granted, as something which will care for itself, is a truth as well authenticated as any known to man; and, if other evidence were lacking, it is a truth sufficiently proved by Dr. Flexner's own examination of American universities. Yet this is not to say that the formation of character should be the concern of the university, as Dr. Flexner uses the word. It *should* be possible to take that for granted in the graduate school and in the schools of law and medicine—but this is merely one way of saying that liberal education is a fundamental prerequisite to entrance into university work, and that it is as perilous to neglect it or slight it as it is to neglect or slight the graduate schools.

There can be no doubt that Dr. Flexner now sets a high value on those results of liberal education which he understands, and clearly sees our need of them; but it is equally plain that liberal education is one thing, and that university work is another; and that the attempt to combine them leads only to confusion harmful, and in the long run destructive, to both—leads in fact to just the conditions of which he himself so justly complains.

Moreover, it is exactly this that an increasing number of men have come to recognize. They see the inevitably dispersive, "atomistic" character of the elective system. They see that even when election is restricted rigidly to *subjects* which, once chosen, commit the student to a prescribed course, the evil is not remedied. For though this may secure coherent intellectual training to the individual, it also relegates him to a class—a

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class of human-looking instruments fashioned and sharpened for a particular purpose. And they see that no true society can be maintained when its members all have different and largely unrelated backgrounds, and derive their standards chiefly from their own restricted fields of knowledge. For men will have standards, cannot live without them, and must derive them from their own experience. But the points of real contact possible under these conditions are severely limited. Sports, matters of food and drink, personal gossip, automobiles—these are the things on which we have to fall back. And it is not merely social intercourse which is reaching new low levels of vulgarity and vacuity amongst us, but all that goes with it to make up—if I may so put it—that portion of life for which we live. By a too exclusive effort after a narrow expertness in many directions—useful by and large only as a means to a higher development of civilization—we are in danger of becoming a race of barbarians, losing precisely the thing for which we thought we had been making specially noble exertions. Hence it is that, as President Frederick J. Kelly writes in his very useful book, *The American Arts College*, "For purposes of general culture, the demand for some method of avoiding the evils of free electives other than by the expedient of group requirements is manifesting itself in many places. There is a feeling that students need a 'common intellectual world' ".

This feeling is, of course, a feeling that students need liberal education, an essential part of which is the formation of a true society of free men, which cannot come into being except in so far as its members do have a "common intellectual world". What is being done in response to the feeling? The growing conviction that something must be done is itself not unimportant, but the capacity of the American college to return to liberal education can only be measured by its performance. And in this instance performance must be rated low indeed. For the response of the college is simply a new required course for entering students—the "orientation course". The general character of the institution remains exactly what it was, save for the addition of a new element to make it even more heterogeneous. And what is an "orientation course"? For answer I will quote a statement by the Director of the Bureau of Educational Research of the Ohio State University, Professor W. W. Charters:

> The functions of such courses are three in number. In the first place, as the title indicates, they help the college freshman to orient himself in the world of knowledge when he is beginning his college course and is bewildered by the hundreds of courses that claim his interest. In the second place, they serve as an *apéritif*; the student learns of the possibilities of further work in a wide range of departments, and his appetite is whetted. In this sense they constitute equipment for educational guidance. In the third place, when orientation courses are adequately prepared they give just the overview of which we have spoken. The builders of these courses "splash at a ten-league canvas with brushes of comet's hair", and the students secure the satisfying picture of the grandeur of human genius. In preparation for seeing life steadily they on this occasion see it whole.

There are, Professor Charters says, several ways in which the subject-matter of these courses may be organized: "For instance, one course might seek to show man's conquest of nature and in consequence treat the great discoveries of the ages; another might emphasize the romance of knowledge and lay stress upon the spectacular products of the game of thinking; and still another might be interested in delineating the services of the fields of knowledge in furthering modern human welfare".*

Unfortunately, I am afraid these two passages adequately describe what is being done. I cannot pretend to an exhaustive acquaintance with this new field of activity,

* Both passages are quoted from an article in *Higher Education in America*, edited by President R. A. Kent, 1930.

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because, alas, life is short. But I have read several of the text-books prepared for the "orientation course", and it is not too much to say that they are uniformly of the character to be expected from Professor Charters's words—that they are, in fact, uniformly anti-educational. The best of those I am familiar with is a large volume entitled *The Making of the Modern Mind*, by Professor John Herman Randall, jun'r. One cannot doubt the conscientious industry of the author, nor the sincerity of his attempt, "by entering sympathetically into the thought of the past, to make the thought of the present more intelligible". Nor is this attempt entirely unsuccessful. Nevertheless, taking it as a whole, the book can only be described as tendentious. It is an effort—the more vicious because it is at least in part an unconscious effort—to load the dice, to teach the boys and girls what to think.

Predigested foods may have a legitimate place in the modern diet, but predigested thought and liberal education are irreconcilably opposed to each other, because the latter is designed to enable men and women to resist propagandas, to hold them up to the light and examine them, and to judge them fairly for what they really are. Liberal education is in part a rigorous course of training in the art of critical thought, and should bring students to the point where they may see *for themselves* how the modern mind has come to be what it is—or rather the many differing modern minds—and where they may see for themselves the inevitable superficiality, the inevitable mistakes and limitations, the inevitable bias of such a book as Professor Randall's. One of the serious problems of our time, within our colleges and universities quite as much as outside of them, is the prevalence of masked propagandas. An important reason for this has been mentioned above; and it is, indeed, an evil apparently inseparable from a nation made up of individuals and groups engaged wholly or chiefly in promoting diverse special interests. This evil, however, cannot be effectively opposed simply by adding to the college curriculum a new propagandistic "course". Such a procedure, on the contrary, merely gives further encouragement to the rapidly growing cynical belief that every utterance on every subject is inspired by interested motives, and that good faith and disinterested discussion are absurd impossibilities. And exactly this is bound to be the ultimate result of handing to students *The Making of the Modern Mind* or any similar tendentious book. For liberal education, we do not want to tell students what they are to think; we want to familiarize them with the best that has been thought and said in the western world, with works which mark the height of human achievement—not with somebody's abridgement and interpretation which may "delightfully purvey third-hand misinformation"; and we want, on this basis of direct contact with the best material, of direct contact with the actual, unique monuments of western culture, to teach students *how* to think, critically, soberly, judiciously, constructively. And this we can certainly do, and in doing it can give students a "common intellectual world", and can train them up to become members of a true society of free men. But this, no less certainly, requires something more, and other, than the precious "orientation course".

II

Professor Joseph Alexander Leighton, in his essay in *Contemporary American Philosophy* writes:

> Our education seems to me scrappy, sloppy, superficial. There is neither continuity, consecutiveness, nor coherence in the work done; consequently there is no appreciation of thoroughness, nor of relationships nor meanings. The things learned are largely chaotic jumbles of raw facts (which are often not facts), retained sufficiently long in the mind to add to the sum-total of time credits. The time credit is the only principle of unification in our education. There is not developed any sense for generalizations, re-

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lationships, meanings, values. Our education is too crassly pragmatic and episodic.

I see no way out except by a concerted effort to foster cultural ideals by abandoning our chaotic elective system (which is not a system) and establishing in the college a well-organized, coherent curriculum in liberal arts, built around an extensive and intensive study of two great phases in the history of culture.

The justice of this severe verdict cannot be disputed, nor, I think, the correctness of the proposed solution, as far as it goes. It is evident, however, that the college cannot go as far, cannot go one-half as far, as Professor Leighton desires. Though our need for liberal education is now widely recognized, though it is now seen to be an imperative need, for reasons of transparent cogency, and though much has been done in a few institutions to show the way to it, still, the vast majority are inwardly quite unaffected, and are bound under present conditions to remain unaffected. They are inwardly dissolved, as I have said, and helpless. Some men still go about saying that the college is "the heart of the university". Dr. Flexner himself said this nearly a quarter of a century ago, but he says it no longer, and he is right. The graduate school, as he now says, is "the heart of the university"; and if the physical analogy is to be used in describing the college, it can only be termed a truncated body with an intact but badly functioning alimentary canal. The function of this canal is to convert food into assimilable substance, and this is what the remaining portion of the college is trying to do. And this analogy might be carried far, for the alimentary canal performs its office in the dark, is usually overtaxed, and is frequently faulty in elimination.

Yet animals cannot do without it, and no more can the university do without liberal education. But, as I have said, if we need universities at all, we need real universities, and it is no less true that if we need liberal education at all we need real liberal education. For the creation of real universities it has been proposed that, in effect, the two upperclass years, now so misleadingly regarded as the higher portion of the college, be placed where they actually belong, in an enlarged graduate school of arts and sciences, or faculty of philosophy. And for the purpose of real liberal education I now wish to propose a new college, preferably not an independent institution, but an integral part of the university, though entirely distinct from its higher schools. The new college should take the place of the rapidly growing army of so-called junior colleges, which at present are displacing the existing colleges, and which soon will do so completely if we do not at once create something better. At present these junior colleges stand as a portent which it is worse than foolish to ignore. But in no long time they will, if nothing is done to check their spread by means of the creation of real colleges, become firmly established—because they are now meeting, though poorly, a real need—and they will thus become a grievous burden, cheapening and clogging our whole system of higher education, and barring the way to its sound development much as existing colleges do now.

What therefore is proposed is the creation of a new college with a three-year course leading to the degree of A.B. and planned in accordance with the principles of liberal education which the preceding discussion has brought to light.

It is useless to expect much from the secondary schools, and the height of folly to lay down requirements for entrance into the new college which candidates cannot at present reasonably be expected to meet. Three definite conditions must, however, be satisfied: Candidates must possess a thorough knowledge of mathematics through trigonometry, must have the ability to read at least one foreign language (ancient or modern) rapidly at sight, and must be able to write English correctly. It is safe to say that scarcely

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one high-school graduate out of a hundred could now meet the second of these requirements, and that scarcely one out of twenty could now meet the third. But unless our high schools are to be accounted a total loss, from the view-point of higher education, these requirements are not at all unreasonable, and they must be met—though, for the rest, the new college must be satisfied merely with a certificate of graduation from an accredited secondary school, public or private.

The work of the first year should be planned with several related purposes in view. Every effort should be made to impress upon students the fact that with the close of their secondary education they can no longer be treated like children, but must, if they are to go further, educate themselves. Class-instruction will be necessary, but should be differentiated as sharply as possible from the kind appropriate, and necessary, in the lower schools. This does not mean that students should be plunged into lecture-courses. There should be some lectures, very carefully prepared, but not many. It does mean that from the outset students should be treated as responsible beings, admitted to the college for a serious purpose; and that as the year advances their own responsibility for the outcome should be made more and more evident to them, through increased independence gradually accorded them in the planning and conduct of their work. Thus, as regards teaching-methods, the year should be designed to effect a complete, but not disastrously sudden, transition from the ways of the school to the freedom of manhood. In content, the studies of the first year should be not simply, or even chiefly, prepartory to further work, though they can and should at the same time serve this purpose. They should provide distinctive and important elements of a liberal education to those who may be unable to go beyond the first year, while serving as an adequate basis for thorough examination intended to determine this question. These requirements can be met in four courses: I. A three-hour course in mathematics beyond trigonometry; II. A four-hour course in the elements of logic and general introduction to philosophy; III. A three-hour course in the literature of the foreign language offered for entrance; and IV. A five-hour course in English and American literature and history. Knowledge, exact and extensive, must be acquired through these four courses, but that knowledge must also be used, and its use must be carefully criticized. Hence an essential part of the work of the first year should be the writing of a short paper each week—perhaps one every three weeks in courses II, III, and IV. No examinations should be given until the close of the year, when a series of papers should be set constituting a rigorous test of the results of the year's work, both knowledge acquired and power to use it.

Only those satisfactorily passing this test should be admitted to the second part of the college course, comprehending the second and third years, and only after such admission should students be regarded as candidates for the degree of A.B. In the second year, students should be required to complete one three-hour course, with experimental work, in the elements of physics; and in the third year the knowledge thus obtained, with some supplementation if this is felt to be necessary, should be used as the basis for a three-hour course, given as concretely as possible, in the logic and philosophy of scientific method.

During these years, however, the major portion of the student's time should be devoted to the mastery of a prescribed set of books, and of sufficient knowledge to understand these books in relation to their backgrounds, with no required formal instruction, but under the direction of a tutor or master who should, during the two years, also set some fifty essay-subjects connected with the prescribed books, and should read and criticize these essays as they are presented to him at weekly or frequent conferences. Conferences might be held with small groups or

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privately with single individuals depending upon circumstances.

At the conclusion of the third year, bestowal of the degree should depend upon a satisfactory showing in a set of general examinations, both written and oral, and including final essay-subjects. The examinations should be prepared and conducted by a board, including representatives from amongst the tutors, and from the faculty of the graduate school of arts and sciences, and also including members drawn from outside the university. Under unusual circumstances students might be permitted to take an additional year to prepare for these examinations, but the work required should not be beyond that which could normally be completed within the allotted period. No premium should under any circumstances be set upon *additional* work, because the primary aim throughout should be thoroughness and good *quality*, and never mere quantity of reading or writing. Likewise, to safeguard the purpose of the course, no student should be permitted to enter the general examinations within a shorter period than two years from the date of his admission to candidacy for the bachelor's degree.

No conditional examination should be permitted within the college, and no more than one repeated examination, either for admission to candidacy or for the degree. Repeated examinations, moreover, should not be specially set for that purpose; so that a student who failed of admission to candidacy would be under the necessity of repeating his first year's work before making his final effort, and a student who failed to pass his general examinations would be compelled to wait for a year before making *his* final attempt. Students obtaining their degrees should be grouped in three classes on the basis of their showing in the general examinations (first, second, and third, or "high honours", "honours", and "passed"), and the place attained should be inscribed on their diplomas. Those obtaining their degrees on the basis of repeated general examinations, however, should only be eligible for the third-class or "pass" degree, and should suffer the penalty of having it stated in their diplomas that they obtained this degree only upon a second attempt. If the work of examination is performed, as it can be and would have to be, conscientiously and wisely, there need be no fear of injustice resulting from these proposed regulations. At present there is much grave injustice done both to society and to individuals because our teachers resort to every conceivable expedient in an effort to evade their responsibilities and avoid pronouncing final sentence upon deficient students. It is a heavy burden which no one can bear with ease, but for colleges and universities and society there are far worse perils which follow upon its evasion. In the new college this burden must be shouldered.

What books should be prescribed to form, beyond the study of physics and of scientific method, the substance of the second part of the course? No agreement can be expected on the answer to this question. Yet the requirements are not indefinite. Failure to agree will arise from precisely the cause which has brought us where we now are—from the multitude of special interests, unjudged and bitterly resentful of judgement by any standards other than their own, which will all clamour for representation. These interests, however, must take their claims to the graduate school of arts and sciences, the home, with the other graduate schools of the university, of specialization. The special object of the new college must be a resolute adherence to *general* education.

This does not mean, however, that students should be given "a little of everything". Not smatterers, not collectors of miscellaneous information, are to be trained up by the new college, but free men possessing "a good judgement or philosophical temper". For that purpose the method of study here proposed is as important as the subject-matter; but the subject-matter too is vitally important, because indisputably it makes a fundamental

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difference what the bases of a man's thinking are. It matters little how keen a man's mind may be, or how vigorously he may exercise it, if the man is "cribbed, cabined, and confined" within the narrow area of, for example, the contemporary scene; the man will remain shallow, provincial, vulgar, and his work in the world, whatever it may be, will be like him. The difference, indeed, between an empty and ignorant man and an informed, educated man lies not in how much they know, but in *what* they know and make fully their own. "No man is the wiser for his learning", said Selden, and his remark is profoundly true. All kinds of learning are necessary, and never more so than today; and learning, too, is necessary for wisdom—but not all kinds.* Yet wisdom also is necessary —alas, how necessary today. And no man is other than ignorant and empty whose humanity has not been developed by intimate contact with the great sources of western culture, and whose understanding has not been deepened to the point where he sees for himself that the constant factors in life throughout the history of the western world are of far higher import than the changing factors. No man, furthermore, can hope genuinely to develop his humanity and deepen his understanding who does not centre his studies in philosophy. "It is the study of philosophy alone", John Burnet wisely wrote, "that can help a young man to approach all other studies aright, and can save him from the narrowing influence of special study. In many cases it can bring about a change of spirit almost as great as a religious conversion. It is certain at any rate that no one can take a place among the *élite* of the nation unless he has a philosophy of some kind, and it is very desirable that some guidance should be given to a young man in forming a personal view of the world for himself."*

Hence the following books are suggested for the second part of the course, not as the best possible group, but as forming the *kind* of group required. Only experimentation could enable one to determine just how many books could properly be included, and just what all of them should be:

Plato: *Phaedrus*; *Phaedo*; *Republic.*
Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics*; *Politics*; *Poetics.*
Aeschylus: *Agamemnon.*
Sophocles: *Antigone.*
Thucydides: *Peloponnesian War.*
Gibbon: *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*
Dante: *Divine Comedy.*
Hooker: *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book I.
Bacon: *Novum Organum*, Book I.
Shakespeare: Six Plays.
Hobbes: *Leviathan*, Parts I and II.
Milton: *Paradise Lost*; *Samson Agonistes.*
Butler: *Sermons on Human Nature*; *Dissertation on Virtue.*
Macaulay: *History of England.*
Hume: *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals.*
Boswell: *Life of Johnson.*
Wordsworth: *The Prelude.*
Mill: *Utilitarianism*; *On Liberty.*
Green: *Prolegomena to Ethics.*
Pater: *Marius the Epicurean.*
Arnold: *Culture and Anarchy.*

* I will tell you, Gentlemen, what has been the practical error of the last twenty years. . . . It has been the error of distracting and enfeebling the mind by an unmeaning profusion of subjects; of implying that a smattering in a dozen branches of study is not shallowness, which it really is, but enlargement, which it is not. . . . All things now are to be learned at once, not first one thing, then another, not one well, but many badly. Learning is to be without exertion, without attention, without toil; without grounding, without advance, without finishing. There is to be nothing individual in it. . . . All have been the victims in one way or other of this most preposterous and pernicious of delusions. . . . Do not say, the people must be educated, when, after all, you only mean, amused, refreshed, soothed, put into good spirits and good humour, or kept from vicious excesses. I do not say that such amusements, such occupations of mind, are not a great gain; but they are not education. You may as well call drawing and fencing education, as a general knowledge of botany or conchology.—*Cardinal Newman.*

* *Higher Education and the War*, 1917, pp. 218-219.

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Discussion of this list could of course be drawn out indefinitely. Some of the books are intended to be read rapidly, while others should be studied minutely; and students should be expected to do a very considerable amount of work during the summers. For the rest, however, I shall let the list speak for itself, and go on to point out that the proposed course of study requires the abolition of the departmental organization of our existing colleges, and the substitution therefor of a less divided staff of instruction. Where more than from two to three hundred students are to be cared for, they should be divided into groups of not more than two hundred and fifty each, with senior tutors acting as resident masters, and with other tutors living—as many of them as possible—as integral members of the groups, in accordance with the "house-plan" adopted nearly twenty years ago for the Graduate College at Princeton and now beginning to be used in the undergraduate colleges at Harvard and Yale. Urban universities with day-students to care for labour under a serious handicap in attempting to provide an education equivalent to that possible in the case of the residential student. Much can be done, however, to lessen the difference between the two classes in this exceedingly important part of liberal education, by the provision of group-quarters —residential for the tutors—for study, social activity, and such meals as the day-students can manage to have in common. Equally in residential universities and in urban universities the "house-plan" should bring about the decline and disappearance of the clubs and fraternities by means of which, in the lack of any care on the part of university officers for a vitally important part of their responsibilities, the students themselves have endeavoured to make good the deficiency.

III

The fact deserves emphasis that the general plan of university organization proposed in these papers does not involve the sacrifice of any work, now widely recognized as useful, which is at present being performed in our colleges and universities. The restriction of specialization to the proper schools of specialized study, and the abolition of the vicious and ruinous interlocking of schools which is now the rule, would simply make it possible for each division of the modern university to perform its appropriate task well, with undivided aim and unsullied integrity. Moreover, the plan here proposed is really an acquiescence in *both* of the tendencies now actually manifesting themselves in American higher education, and an attempt, in finding an unrestricted scope for each, to get the full "good" of each, and not to fall between two stools in some compromise bound to work badly and to end in defeating all objects aimed at. This, it is not too much to say, is the ignominious position we are now in, under the ostensible leadership of weak brethren who will consent to any enormity rather than stir up trouble, and, consequently, under the real leadership of "the quack, the technician, the clever 'salesman', and the practical man". The reorganization suggested in these papers may not be the best conceivable, but it has one incontestable merit: It makes no terms with these gentry—money-changers in the temple—who, because they find their profit in it, are responsible for an infinite amount of grievous confusion, of sheer pretence, and of wasted effort in our universities today.

Dr. Flexner, to be sure, also makes no terms with these gentry—and it is one of the high merits of his *Universities*—and he does lay down the indispensable conditions for the creation of real graduate schools. But, without now intending so to do, he drops liberal education from his program—though without it his specialists are bound to be simply a curse to humanity. It is chimerical to expect from our high schools the improvement in their work which would be essential to the execution of his complete plan. But, even if a miracle should some day bring the

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betterment he demands, liberal education would still remain wholly unprovided for. It is, said John Burnet in the thoughtful book, too little known, from which I have already quoted, "only in the free atmosphere of the university that philosophy can flourish"—not in the secondary schools, how much soever they may be strengthened and improved. This, I think, is self-evident; and it seems to me that a program of liberal education needs only to be drawn up to make it clear that the place for it is in the university. The stages of education are not two in number, as Dr. Flexner has persuaded himself, from looking too fixedly at the bright side—there is another side, as Burnet has shown and as the Germans themselves well know—of just what interests him most in German education. The stages are three—secondary education, liberal education, and specialization—and none can be omitted without disaster.*

It will be said, doubtless, that even though this be true, it is ridiculous to talk of "the free atmosphere of the university" in connection with such a course of study for the bachelor's degree as has been outlined above. That course is rigid, makes no allowance for the infinite variations of temper, of taste, of ability, and the like which constitute each of us an unique individual, and is designed to mould all to an identical form. It has, at any rate, this appearance. But it should be remembered that this is precisely the complaint which increasingly is being made against existing colleges, despite the infinite variations in the subject-matter of the college course which are now possible. The elective system, even when greatly "modified", has made the studies of the existing colleges insignificant, unessential—save in so far as they may have a vocational slant—and has transferred the emphasis to administration, which has become so standardized that practically all undergraduate students everywhere in the United States now go through identical motions, as in a drill, whose completion brings them their degrees. The present system, besides its other grave evils, gives students freedom to make choices which they cannot make intelligently, and which they do make for the worst possible reasons, in the worst possible ways. This is the unanimous testimony of a generation of observers, so conclusive that it has caused everywhere the "modification" of the system.

But if the system is bad, will "modification" render it good? If we are serious, if liberal education is anything more than a name, can we, can the nation, afford thus to palter with it? Wherever we are serious in education, wherever we have a purpose in view which education is to serve, we attempt so to define that purpose as to make it an efficacious guide in the construction of a course of training, definite, coherent, leading straight to the goal. We do not often suppose that the course thus constructed—in the law school, in the medical school, in the engineering school, in the military school—is absolutely the best thing for the purpose. There is nothing final about it; with changes in circumstances, with additions to knowledge, it is altered; but we do keep on trying to make it the best course possible at the time. We do not simply throw up the whole effort in weak despair and introduce an elective system. We do not conclude that the subject-matter of a legal education is a perfectly indifferent thing, that the technique of "passing" courses is really what we are aiming at, and that freedom to choose the courses is the sporting thing to offer the student.

No, legal education is too important to be made a game of in this flippant way. And is liberal education less important? The problem it offers is much more difficult, but that

*This should not be taken to imply a condemnation of the Institute for Advanced Study. On the contrary, though the situation which requires the founding of a new institution rather than the strengthening of an older one is little less than scandalous, it does exist; and though the necessity of confining its scope, at present, to specialized graduate studies is a misfortune, it is real; and I think nothing less than the great undertaking Dr. Flexner has in hand could bring about some of the needed changes in our higher education.

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is a different thing. It is more difficult because liberal education is the most important of all kinds, and because the possible ways of achieving some measure of its humanizing influence are well-nigh infinite. This, however, does not mean that one way is as good as another, or that it is useless to try to discover and cleave to the best way, or that we are wise to abandon the problem to irresponsible children because it is too much for us. On the contrary, it means that those who so abdicate their responsibilities while clinging to their offices deserve the worst fate that society can inflict upon them. They are the enemies of our common humanity, and they are doing what in them lies to destroy civilization.

The program of liberal education which I have outlined does, then, take away from students a certain freedom. But the freedom which it takes away is a freedom which they do not in fact have, because it is one which they cannot exercise responsibly; and in return it offers them the possibility of becoming free men—free in a true and full sense hardly conceivable by those who are the victims of a merely functional training. More than this, it offers great freedom of a kind which students can exercise, and which they must be made to exercise if their education is to make them men. This it does through the method of study gradually introduced in the first year, and fully operative in the second and third years. This method places the burden of responsibility for his salvation upon the student, giving him the greatest possible measure of independence in the conduct of his work, and permitting—indeed encouraging—the utmost flexibility of procedure. The method of study is that proper to the university—not to the secondary school; and the freedom of choice accorded to the student is identical with that accorded to him in the other divisions of the university. Everybody is free to choose whether or not he will try to become a physician, but if he does so choose, the subject-matter of his course of study is determined by his decision. It should be the same with liberal education.

The program here proposed may not be the best that can be formed. It would be an exceedingly foolish person who could feel sure of that. I can only say for it that I think it meets the demands of the historic definition of liberal education in terms of our present circumstances, knowledge, and needs. One of these is the demand that liberally educated men shall form a true society. We hear a great deal nowadays about the social character of life, and about the grandeur of consecration to social service. No one would think of decrying, under present conditions, the services which the usually complacent and self-righteous experts in these matters chiefly have in mind. But these experts deal with the dregs of society and, as in other occupations, they tend to be subdued to the level of their work. They have helped to mechanize, cheapen, and vulgarize the meaning of society. The word needs to be rescued from them. What is most needed under all conditions and at all times is a social service of a much more important kind than any within their ken—the formation and preservation of a true society of free men. But no society can rise higher than the common level of its members' intellectual and moral world. And this is the compelling reason for making the subject-matter of liberal education not alone the most enduringly significant and valuable of the works of man, not alone those which deal rather with the meaning than with the circumstances of life, but also as far as may be possible identical for all who receive it.

This involves sacrifices, of course. But so does our present system. The student's time and capacity are equally limited in any case. The only difference is that at present each student may offer up a sacrifice not identical with his neighbour's, and so may reduce by that much the possibility of a society of educated men. And in order that this social disservice may be freely performed, the work

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of the college has to be divided up into hundreds of little self-contained "courses", like pills, and the preposterous delusion has to be propagated that a liberal education can be taken in separate doses, like pills—so many pills of this, that, and the other kind, so much "culture". It is not so; and the patent fact is that the sole benefit of the present system accrues to the college catalogue, which can now, one must admit, be made to look very imposing and symmetrical.

But this is a vanity with which we could dispense. And, before making an end, I must merely mention one advantage which would result from this act of self-denial. When graduates of the proposed new college proceeded to specialized study in the higher schools of the university they could be treated, not like boys, but like men. And the real graduate schools of which Dr. Flexner dreams could thus, and only thus, I think, come into being. It would, too, be possible to combine a year's specialized work of a mature and responsible kind—which means an amount equivalent to at least two years under present conditions—with a genuine liberal education, in the time now required for the existing undergraduate course. And an M.A. bestowed for a coherent specialized course, conducted by the method here outlined, and extended over two years in the graduate school, would become a significant degree, adequate for all save those who aimed at a university professorship or an independent career in science or scholarship. And for these the Ph.D. should be reserved, as at once a reward and warranty of distinguished proficiency and success in research.

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A MONTH OF THE THEATRE

BROADWAY IN WARM WEATHER

by Francis Fergusson

BETWEEN the end of the Spring season and the beginning of the Fall openings in July and August, when everyone who can afford it goes away for the summer, Broadway is reduced to its travelling-salesman and summer-tourist minimum. The shows that survive are hardy and democratic, and the new arrivals are rouged up and tricked out to seduce the baldheaded row. At this writing few of the proper summer offerings have appeared, but a number of recent hits give promise of being able to last out the doldrums: melodramas, comedies of various kinds of lightness.

Drama and Melodrama

M. Bernstein is said to have called his new one *Melo* as a gesture of defiance against certain French critics who had been calling all his plays melodramas instead of drama proper. The original meaning of this word was drama accompanied by music; but it has come to mean with us popular drama of strong emotions, and at last sentimental drama in which the emotions are in bad taste. It is in this latter sense that *Melo*, out of Paris by way of Lee Shubert and A. H. Woods, deserves to be called melodrama. It was adapted by Arthur Pollock, staged by Marcel Varnel, and is acted by a headline trio: Basil Rathbone, Edna Best and Earle Larimore. Mr. Larimore plays a young musician who is married to a temperamental and childish woman, played by Miss Best; and Mr. Rathbone, with his eternal dinner jacket and sad, distinguished face, constitutes the third leg of the triangle. After Miss Best has fallen in love with Mr. Rathbone, and tried to poison Mr. Larimore, she drowns herself in the Seine. In the unfolding of this tearful history M. Bernstein has provided each of his three principals with sure-fire scenes. Mr. Larimore, adoring his wife, has many an opportunity to be weak and charming, and one opportunity, while trying to digest the poison, to be heart-rending. Mr. Rathbone can make love to Miss Best in the first act, and in a different way in the second; and in the third he can mope about her grave, and suffer in silence with Mr. Larimore, who suspects but cannot prove his wife's liaison.

This old-timer, which has some of the shameless indestructible glamour of *La Dame aux camélias*, skilfully ropes in our playgoers; and having impressed them with the authority of a Packard advertisement, it melts them like Rudy Vallée's crooning, intimate simultaneously with a million ears.

Apropos of modern drama, one should mention the short-lived production of Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, which Mr. Tom Van Dycke presented a short time ago. The production was neither so neat nor so imaginative as the Pitoeffs' in Paris five or six years ago; but the acting

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of Walter Connolly, Eugene Powers, Paul Guilfoyle and Eleanor Phelps was as good as anything the season produced. The clean, surgical pessimism of the play itself was like a disinfectant after the unappetizing stuff one had been seeing night after night, a large proportion of which I have spared the reader. It is really unfortunate that in spite of the intelligence of the actors the audience could not be made to feel the drama in Pirandello's theme, which is after all a modern, tormented version of the Shakespearean "We are such stuff as dreams are made on".

The Lightness of Light Comedy

"But do not you know, that when favours are conferred upon instant and tedious solicitation, that they diminish in their value, and that both the giver loses his grace, and the receiver lessens his pleasure?" asks Mirabel, in *The Way of the World*, wooing the difficult Millamant; and she replies, ". . . never in love". She would rather be wooed than won; and throughout the glittering arabesques of Congreve's play she collaborates with the author to lengthen the distance between love's beginning and love's consummation.

To judge by Mr. Noel Coward's current hit, *Private Lives*, the Londoners have changed since 1700, and their writers of comedy with them. Mr. Coward shows us four honeymooners in a French hotel, of whom the groom of couple number 1 (Mr. Coward) and the bride of couple number 2 (Miss Gertrude Lawrence) are already bored with their new mates. They presently meet, and recognize each other as ex-husband and wife respectively. Under the influence of a Coward song (instead of the verses of Suckling which Millamant quotes when amorous) they easily agree to elope again, and the lady is more eager than the man. During the second act they bore each other and vastly amuse the audience in a Paris apartment; and at last break down and fight with teeth and nails. At this moment the abandoned husband and wife come in, and in the third act they get themselves sorted out again.

The difference between this comedy and Congreve's masterpiece is not only the difference between Mr. Coward and Congreve; nor that Congreve's lovers fight with their wits and Coward's with their feet—the very notion of what it is that makes light comedy light has changed in two hundred years. When Millamant says "There never yet was woman made, nor shall but to be cursed! That's hard", she is perhaps serious, but she is not *larmoyante*, as Mr. Coward is, when, in the intervals of his necking, he remarks that we are only worms. Mr. Coward's plays all have these soft little whines in them; but lightness on the stage cannot be soft, it must be tense, like gymnastics, and it is this agility of the sensibility, of the mind, of the spirit, that distinguishes Congreve from his tiny heir. Congreve's people realize the situations they are in; they are among thorns, but they are light and active there, while Coward's people, to play out his geometric "situations", are obliged to forget the heavy lump of their disgusts and bewilderments.

This is perhaps taking Mr. Coward's plays more seriously than they deserve; and in any case we must be grateful for the lightness he does have, which is the lightness of the actor and of the *metteur-en-scène*. He and Miss Lawrence are as masterful and agile in their acting as he is gloomy and sophomoric in his "philosophy". The second act, for instance, when nothing happens, when the two principals are on the stage alone, and under a gradually cracking restraint we are made to feel their amorousness getting sourer and sourer, is a virtuoso performance which as mere acting could not be better. The audience, watching it, is uncomfortable, absorbed, angry, and when at last Mr. Coward and Miss Lawrence begin to knock over the furniture they are ready to join in with whoops of relieved laughter. Besides, they feel in the whole play a kind of lightness flatteringly

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akin to their own: the lightness of vacancy. They can file out, having been diverted, but as divinely empty-headed as they came.

Old Man Murphy

The Irish are notoriously good material for comedy, as Mr. Patrick Kearney when he wrote this play, and Mr. Harry Wagstaff Gribble when he adapted and directed it, carefully remembered. The audience, Irishmen all, get the point also, and may probably be counted on to keep it going through the hot months. An Irish business man in a middle-western city changed his name from Murphy to Murfree to get along; but when he comes to run for Mayor, his betrayal of old Erin threatens to alienate the Irish vote. His old father, still called Murphy, comes from Ireland to help, having a flair for politics; and there follow complications between him, Murfree's snobbish wife, the "shanty Irish", and Murfree's heart-of-gold daughter. In the course of this development, Irish whisky, Irish fun, Irish quarrelsomeness and the ineluctable distinctions between Irish, Americans and Jews, are exploited with hilarity.

If this play is worth seeing, it is because of the performances of Maire O'Neill, who plays a "patch" biddy, and her husband, Arthur Sinclair, who plays Old Man Murphy. Miss O'Neill gave one of the best character performances of the year in *Mr. Gilhooley*. She is not quite so good here, though easily the best in the cast. Mr. Sinclair, at a loss in *Mr. Gilhooley*, understands loud farce much better; and though his performance is entirely lacking in subtlety, it is as vigorous, sure and authoritative as could be desired.

A Modern Virgin

This new comedy by Elmer Harris is another one that gives promise of flourishing through the summer. As might have been expected, the modern Virgin has a repressed aunt, is looking for information about the facts of life, and is a rebel only because people have said *don't* to her too much. As one might also have predicted, the actors and the sets were store-bought; they run to clubmen, pink chaise-longues, French maids, hunting-lodges with crossed sabres and decanters, and free-loving authors. It is all the more surprising to find among these stale and sure-fire iconoclasms, these ill-assorted inanimate lumps of Shubert magnificence, Miss Margaret Sullavan a delightful and talented young actress, playing the leading rôle. This is Miss Sullavan's first star part, and she has been unanimously and rightly acclaimed as a real "find". Even the hopeless stupidity of the lines come alive in her reading of them; even her Whitman-out-of-*True-Stories* "prayer to life" can almost be heard without embarrassment as she gives it. The part as written is monotonous; but she manages to make it seem so varied and colorful that she almost persuades us something happened on the stage. It is another example to prove that acting may at times become almost independent of author and director.

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FICTION

31 FAMILIES UNDER HEAVEN *by Georg Fink* (LIVERIGHT. $2.50)

THIS novel—the first work of a youth of twenty-seven—was published last year in Germany as *Mich Hungert*. The book won considerable notice. This year a second novel dealing with similar proletarian material, *Hast du dich verlaufen?* has appeared. Mr. Fink, in a letter to *Die Literatur* of last October, states that the earlier novel is the direct expression of experience. One would infer as much.

"I'm hungry", the cry that opens and ends this autobiography of a pauper child, characterizes its dominant emotion. The ugly little Jew Theodore Koenig tells how he grew up in a Berlin slum surrounded by vice, filth, and misery; and we see his soft spiritual nature developing in these circumstances an aptitude for cosmic pity and helpless yearning after beauty and love. The family felt the full misery of the war years and the deflation. They lived in an old building swarming with unclean humanity; and the stinking privy under their window is recalled again and again like a symbol. Teddy's father was a drunken blackguard; his sister, first corrupted by her own father, a whore; his brother, a thief. His mother, after years of slavery at the washboard, died of cancer. At the close, the youth, still in his twenties but aged in spirit, lives on alone in the rooms where his mother died, though financially able to go elsewhere. His spirit pathologically bound to the poverty and misery of his childhood, he seems unable to free himself from memory and dangerously inclined to lay upon himself the weight of all the suffering of human wreckage everywhere.

The hunger, in fact, though at first physical, is chiefly spiritual. Teddy's mother, who had come from a good family, gave him all she could of her gentle breeding, and his love for her is the dominant passion of his life. Through his brilliance at school he is admitted to the home of a wealthy manufacturer; and here he gains friendship, a love for great music, and hopeless love for beautiful women. The boy was a born mimic, and in cabarets he learns to express dramatically his yearning and his futility. Fink's model here would seem to be Charlie Chaplin, but with the farce left out. Teddy hungers for beauty and love only to lose them when they seem in his grasp.

This emphasis on the softer emotions is in marked contrast to the cold objectivity of traditional naturalism. The autobiographical method exposes the hero to the danger of seeming a prig, an egoist, or a mollycoddle; and though Fink is aware of the danger, Teddy Koenig, with his yearning, morbid temperament, does not always escape it. But perhaps the difficulty lies deeper. The very sincerity and emotion which give the novel its power suggest that the author is confessing his own life; and we suspect that the novel is really what Teddy confesses it to be, the effort of a neurotic to win catharsis by writing his troubles out. If such is the case it explains the author's lack of objectivity. At all events the novel reads like a "human document" rather than a controlled work of art. As "human document" the novel deserves attention. Like Gorki, Fink speaks with an authentic voice about those in the lower depths; and like Dostoievski he maintains, against an environment of spiritual nihilism, the values of love and beauty. That they can

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spring up from misery and evil is the positive implication of the book. But here the author stops; he can see no further. "I love you, my sisters and brothers! Sneak-thieves, whores, burglars, pimps and bums. Yes! You are all that and still I love you. I belong to *you* because you need some one. And yet . . . what can I do for you?" The answer is, Nothing. And from such an unfortunate as Teddy one cannot expect more. Yet more is necessary; and to men blessed with healthier nurture and more normal spirit it will seem possible. Probably the author will find his way to it in later books.

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON

FIDDLERS' GREEN *by Albert R. Wetjen* (LITTLE, BROWN. $2.00)

THE adventures of the British sailor, Tommy Lawn, provide the excuse and the continuity for this collection of marine legends. With the wreck of his ship Tommy is drowned and awakens at the bottom of the sea. He is examined in navigation by the Old Man of the Sea and admitted finally to Fiddlers' Green, the sailors' paradise. Here he meets Columbus, Mother Carey, Ulysses. He looks into Davy Jones's Locker. He listens to the incredible talk of The Man Who Flogged the Dolphin. The mysteries of the marine heaven, of which he has heard only rumors, are all unfolded and revealed.

The author explains in a foreword that Tommy Lawn's story grew out of the wish to preserve the tales he had listened to as a child, tales that have been neglected by both the reader and the anthropologist, and that, with the coming of steam, are being adapted or forgotten. It is easy to agree with Mr. Wetjen on the worth of his material. The tales he has selected range from the robust to the tender, but they are all of high imaginative quality. Everyone has heard of Davy Jones's Locker, but how many readers know of Casey Jones's Glory Hole and of the Deadly Feud between the Brothers Jones? Mr. Wetjen's telling of these tales would, I think, have been better if he had used less dialect in the speeches and repressed a little of his whimsical bent.

THE MAN WHO DIED *by D. H. Lawrence* (KNOPF. $1.75)

THIS is not one of Lawrence's posthumous books. As the American publishers announce, it was written some time ago, and published just before his death by a small press in Paris, under the title of *The Escaped Cock*. The present miniature volume is, by the way, physically one of Knopf's best productions.

Towards the end of his life Lawrence, like Tolstoy, took to writing stories that were akin to the parable; the reason in both cases was obviously a preoccupation with their ideas. But whether Lawrence's art survived the change and adjusted itself to the new need, as Tolstoy's did, is a question to which we shall return later. *The Man Who Died* is at any rate a parable, and one that turns the tables on the master of the form; for, of this parable, Jesus is himself the subject.

The story supposes that Jesus survived the cross and escaped from the tomb. In the first episode of his life thereafter, Christ the teacher is seen developing into Jesus the man. Awakening from the delightful oblivion of death he is reluctant to return to life. But an impulse, stronger than disillusion, leads him finally to thrust back the stone. He takes shelter with a peasant couple, who, out of fear, the hope of money and a variety of ignoble motives, consent to hide and feed him. This couple, once among the humble inheritors of the earth, now appear to him as merely base. Nevertheless he stays with them, rejoicing in the sun, reflecting on his past, considering his future. He sees in the barnyard a lusty young cock that the peasants have tied by the leg; and this confined fowl becomes for Jesus a symbol of the vitality of the natural world and the deadly compul-

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sions of the human. The symbol has its effect upon his thoughts:

> It was the mania of cities and societies and hosts to lay a compulsion upon men, upon all men. For men and women alike were mad with the egoistic fear of their own nothingness. And he thought of his own mission, how he had tried to lay the compulsion of love on all men. And the old nausea came back on him. For there was no contact without a subtle attempt to inflict a compulsion. . . .

He decides to wander, to enjoy, to keep free of compulsions. His travels bring him to a temple below Lebanon, dedicated to the mystery of Isis Bereaved. The priestess is a young Roman; dissatisfied with the men of her race she has come here with her mother to wait for the uncommon lover, the risen god, for whom she imagines she is reserved. Hence her devotion to the cult of Isis Bereaved, Isis in search of Osiris. To this little temple Jesus comes as a beggar. The priestess recognizes him as her destined lover, gives him shelter in a cave, and her love as well. However, after a season of ecstatic midnight meetings in the temple, under the eyes of the marble Isis, Jesus begins to fear for his independence. It isn't, to be sure, that the little Roman wishes to confine him, but that the Roman's mother resents his presence and plans to kill him. He easily, cunningly, escapes her, and rows away, thinking in a satisfied way that he has put his touch forever on the choice woman of the time, and that tomorrow is another day.

The development of Jesus from an idealist into an epicurean, from a Messiah into a man of only wits and senses, is characteristic of the philosophy of Lawrence. One will notice in the story, as I have sketched it, other typical ideas: the need for spiritual independence, the nobility of nature as compared with man, the faith in instinct, the fascination with death. One curious development is worth pointing out. Beginning as a naturalist, Lawrence was brought, by his contempt for men and admiration for nature, to set them apart in what, to the humanist, would be an inverted "dualism". And, such deductions being in order, we might venture a parallel. Lawrence's thinking is very much like the thinking of Robinson Jeffers, as Dwight Macdonald in an essay on that poet has already pointed out. The resemblance is made more interesting by the fact that both writers, at about the same time, chose Christ as a subject. Both see, perhaps, in the times of Jesus an image of our own times, and in the Roman an image of modern meanness and capacity. Both writers exhibit Jesus as harking back over his life, in a disillusioned, an almost cynical way. It is, of course, a dramatic way of giving their own views of Jesus and Christianity. There is, however, in their conception of Jesus, this characteristic difference: that for Jeffers he was always the Superman, the lover of power; while for Lawrence, as I have said, he is at first the idealist and at last the man of instinct.

Given Lawrence's philosophy, *The Man Who Died* is a concise, a dramatic expression of it. The figure of Jesus is well worked out from the premises and the little priestess is a delicate observation on the visionary girl. Excellent in its specifications, the story is, nevertheless, miserably written. The late tales of Tolstoy are, to revert to that comparison, serene, charming tales; they are easily written and easily read, and the parable is "incarnate in the narrative". But Lawrence saw a more contemptible world than Tolstoy and he was, accordingly, the more desperate man. This desperation smokes and boils in his late work, and struggles for the word. It is all strain and effort, exposed metaphysics and inarticulate philosophy. With more on his mind than he could find terms for Lawrence fell into the habit of adjectives, of ugly, Teutonic combinations of words. *The Man Who Died* is like some beautifully planned and proportioned house with stucco on its walls and inferior glass in its windows.

FREDERICK DUPEE

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LITTLE GREEN APPLES *by Geoffrey Moss* (BREWER, WARREN & PUTNAM. $2.00)

WHEN you come right down to it, the Riviera is just another "racket". There are only a few left who take it seriously, and most of them have the good sense not to write about it. As a backdrop for mystery stories it suffices very well, as Oppenheim, Valentine Williams and one or two others have shown us, and once in a blue moon it inspires a really amusing novel like Allan Updegraff's *Whatever We Do* of a few seasons back. But the average light love story with a Côte d'Azur setting is apt to fall about as flat as yesterday's French omelette.

Perhaps I do Geoffrey Moss an injustice, but *Little Green Apples* semed to me as if it had all been done before, and to much better purpose. I hardly had to read the brief foreword because of its familiar ring: "The characters in this book are imaginary. The towns, St. Didier les Sapins and St. Trou do not exist, but there are many like them". Of course there was the expected bit about Cannes and Monte Carlo—"good old Monte", as one of the imaginary characters must exclaim. Nor did it startle me particularly to learn that the hero was an ingenuous youth just down from Oxford, who allowed the Riviera to "get" him in a manner if not usual, at least not unheard of, in this the exalted day of the gigolo. Apparently unable to turn an honest penny, or come by a lucky one, he accepts the assistance first of one Lady Flo Haig-Burton and then that of her more predatory successor, Mlle Christine Penod, on terms that persuade him to prolong his stay indefinitely. Life rolls along pleasantly—in fact very pleasantly indeed—until the dark cloud on the horizon turns out to be the pure young girl he could not deceive with such a past. When he attempts to undeceive her, this lovely young Faith who adores him, it all goes smash and he lands rather abruptly in a travelling circus bound for Marseilles.

This is the setting and this is the plot. There is only one surprise left—Little Green Apples is the name of the hero! If you find that hard to believe, read the book and you will find it plainly printed, as your annoyance increases, at least once on practically every one of its two hundred and eighty-seven pages. It may be that this will amuse you and at times cause you to chuckle audibly. On the other hand, I greatly doubt it.

DALE WARREN

SLOW SMOKE *by Charles Malam* (FARRAR & RINEHART. $2.50)

AN austere Protestant minister is the hero of this novel of cramped lives in Vermont. The book is well titled, for there is something leisured and languorous about the tale of the friendly, idealistic young minister who became so warped and narrowed and sharpened with the wearing events of the years. The book begins tenderly and gently—it ends grimly and tragically. The Reverend Stanley Gregorson had long desired a son, but when a son finally arrives, his wife dies. This son, Arthur, grows up to be a source of disappointment to his father by refusing to enter the ministry and by living with a girl his father does not approve of. Like his father, Arthur is stricken by nature in her cruelest mood—his wife, too, dies bearing a son, and finally Arthur is found dead under circumstances that look like suicide.

Hardly a cheerful book, this, and one written with great earnestness and that type of seriousness usually referred to as "high". It misses being a great tragedy and a great book through this very earnestness—it lacks expansiveness, richness, and that quiet ironical humor which illumines even the bitterest tragedies. It suffers from the limitations of its narrow and dogma-bound hero. But for the thoughtful reader the book will hold some moments of quiet splendour and sharp drama.

MARIE LUHRS

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FROM DAY TO DAY *by Ferdynand Goetel* (VIKING. $2.50)

FERDYNAND GOETEL has written a novel of savour and freshness using a technique which I do not recall as having ever been used in a serious novel and in the same way before. The protagonist (Stanislaw) is writing a novel based on an episode in his own past. As we read the "novel" in its daily instalments we follow, contemporaneously, the events of his daily life as recounted in his diary. Thus we come to know the man in both his present and his past as the two stories become interwoven.

The novel within the novel tells of the experiences of two Polish officers, who having served in the Austrian Army, are captured by the Russians and sent to a prison camp in Turkestan. From there they are transferred to a farm owned by the young girl, Maruisa, daughter of a Russian-Polish Colonel who is away at the front. Tadeusz (the real Stanislaw of the diary) falls in love with Maruisa and she with him. But Tadeusz has a wife in Poland whom he must first divorce before they can marry. With the outbreak of the Revolution Tadeusz escapes and after a frightful journey of months arrives home too exhausted, emotionally and physically, to carry his plans through. He lets matters take their course. This, in the fragments that we read, is the story out of the past.

But in the meantime the reader has become absorbed in the drama of Stanislaw's daily life at home as revealed in the diary. We see the growing conflict between him and his wife, Zosia, a subtly revealed character. We see the old friend, Felix, who was Ignacy in the "novel". We follow the course of his affair with Helen which leads to a duel. And then the dead romance which Stanislaw is commemorating in his novel comes to life in the diary. Shadows from the past materialize into living people of the present. The "novel" is dropped. And the last pages of the diary complete the story as the two tales merge into one. Irony is here as well as melancholy; and the romantic nostalgia for the past fuses with the swift moving realism of the contemporary drama. Together they go to make an engrossing tale freshly and ingeniously woven, an extraordinary study of a man, an outstanding novel of the season.

FRED T. MARSH

THE SQUARE CIRCLE *by Denis Mackail* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $2.50)

THE author of *The Good Companions* and *Angel Pavement* has, we may be sure, led many of his English contemporaries to emulate, with mellow whimsicality, his touch in comedy-realism. Indeed, Denis Mackail has learned so well the formula that he out-Priestleys Priestley. In *The Square Circle* we find the same intimate concern with people who are quite ordinary human beings living out, from day to day, their little triumphs and disappointments. There is the same genuine delight, the same sympathetic amusement, in each aspect of their behaviour; the same precious gift of observation which accords to the fall of a leaf a significance mightier than the turn of a planet. But Mr. Mackail's intimacy is so intimate, his gossip so revealing, that we feel almost a sense of guilt in leaving so little privacy to these good people. His sympathy, while real, and his amusement, while honest and without malice, intrude somewhat too often; and the funny bumps are sometimes too obvious. In the beauty of his observation in detail, however, Mr. Mackail perfects Priestley. We feel that we would know every inch of Tiverton Square—the "square circle" —if we ever came across it: the iron railings, the trees, the shrubberies, the gates, the rustic tubs filled with scarlet geraniums by Harris the gardener; and exactly how it would look to each resident of the Square from season to changing season.

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There isn't any plot, really. Nothing is begun, nothing is completed. It is just a cross-section of middle-class life in one particular spot of contemporary London, as seen from the holiday return in one autumn to the summer exodus a year later. We never, actually, step out of the little world in itself that is Tiverton Square. We might almost be living in Number Twenty-four, and watching (with Miss Leggatt's sharp eyes) the affairs of our forty-three neighbours.

We might see Mr. George Bristow taking his dog Angus out, and meeting shy Miss Carpenter; we would notice that the young Davidsons were getting ready for another cocktail party; we would, inescapably, follow the pathetically frustrated romance of Miss Nicolette Norton and poor young Mr. Fawcett; learn that Lady Poley, the dowager "Queen" of the Square, will give a dance for her débutante granddaughter; behold Ralph Allinson's disreputable sports-model parked in front of Number Thirty-seven; and follow little Esmé Allinson's escape from Nannie to write the two painful lines of her first poem (and this would give us a theme for our novel):

> The years go by,
> Soon we shall all be dead.

We would see all this—and over it and under it and above it—if we were the good observer that Mr. Mackail is. No reader who took especial delight in Mr. Priestley's novels, or in the irresistible humour of Mr. Mackail's previous story, *The Young Livingstones*, can afford to miss *The Square Circle*.

RUTH LECHLITNER

THE WEIGHER OF SOULS *by André Maurois* (APPLETON. $2.00)

ANDRÉ MAUROIS, still in his "years of apprenticeship", has just given the world two striking examples of his versatility and breadth of interest. His lectures on Turgenev surprised those who thought he had arbitrarily limited himself, in biography, to English studies; and *The Weigher of Souls* has upset the pigeonholing critics who expected his subsequent works of fiction to follow the pattern set down in *Atmosphere of Love*. This tale, however, is closer to the manner of Jules Verne than to that of Maurois's other novels; in fact it cannot but remind one of Poe and Hoffmann, with this great difference: that their plots, as they are presented, are often manifestly impossible, whereas Maurois's has a great air of plausibility and may, like the novels of Verne, be an anticipation of future experiments.

A certain idealistic young Frenchman, who very much resembles his creator, encounters in a great London hospital an English doctor whom he had known during the war. Doctor James, questioned about the strange anxiety which is obviously tormenting him, soon reveals to his friend that he is seeking, by a series of experiments performed upon the hospital corpses, to determine the nature of the soul. Having ascertained through a weighing of human and animal bodies that "each living being is animated by a certain form of energy which leaves the body shortly after death", he finally manages to isolate that energy under a large glass bell and, thanks to the young Frenchman, to make it visible under ultra-violet rays. Chance brings him the bodies of two trapeze-performers who had loved each other to the point of fusing two personalities into one and who had died together; Doctor James's joy is unbounded when he succeeded in uniting their two essences in one glowing substance under the same glass. At this point the purpose of these experiments becomes apparent to their French witness; he meets the woman whom the doctor loves and who for some time has been on the point of death. Suddenly she dies, during her honeymoon with the doctor in the south of France, and the doctor, after sending a hurried call for his friend, kills himself so that their souls may be eternally fused together. The friend arrives too late, for the

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bodies have already been buried, and he is left with nothing but a memory of gruesome evenings spent in the basement morgue of St. Barnaby's and a globe whose intangible contents gleam brilliantly under the fluoroscopic rays.

This eerie and entrancing tale is told with consummate art. Its action takes place in so tense an atmosphere that it is almost impossible not to read it at one sitting, and each time that one's curiosity is momentarily satisfied it is instantly re-aroused on another score. Maurois here reveals himself for the first time as a master of the subtle art of keeping his readers in suspense.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

DON JUAN *by Joseph Delteil* (CAPE & SMITH. $2.50)

THE progress of this Don Juan is from "*odor di femina*" to "odour of sanctity". Taking his text from Barrès, to whom Don Juan "evoked Pascal", M. Delteil has developed the idea that "Don Juans are invariably Jansenists". His hero does not descend to hell amid operatic flames at the conclusion of his scene with the Commander's Statue, therefore, but after a "tête-à-tête with the Virgin" enters a monastery and attempts to make even the animals chaste. So much, however, for M. Delteil's "idea"; his book has no more intellectual weight than a fashion note. His real purpose in choosing the Don Juan story was to find a suitable thread for his smart phrases and his original incidents—and, above all, scope for his pornography. The latter plays such an important part in his work that not all of the incidents which he has invented—the theft of the birds, the murder of the swan, the seduction by the washerwomen, the children in the ditch, the expiation in the "smoking vats"—could be repeated here. As for the phrases, their smartness lies generally in their novel combination of the contemporary with the classic, of the breezy with the historic; and they may be said to be epitomized in that passage where M. Delteil compares the smile of the Virgin to "the smile of the supreme Trained Nurse".

The moralist will condemn this book as dirty; the *littérateur* as second-hand. (The invented incidents, it is true, are distinctive, but anyone can see that their violent novelty is not inspired but calculated.) The translation is by the gifted Kay Boyle, who has also written an introduction in which she has ingeniously provided the publishers with a blurb for M. Delteil and at the same time has avoided compromising her judgment by saying nothing about him that is tangibly favourable.

GERALD SYKES

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BIOGRAPHY

SCHLIEMANN: THE STORY OF A GOLD-SEEKER *by Emil Ludwig* (LITTLE, BROWN. $3.50)

No Arabian Nights' adventure is more incredibly fascinating than that of Schliemann unearthing Homer's Troy, and no gold hid in the recesses of the earth appeals to the imagination so forcibly as those nine strata of cities he found buried in the Trojan mound. What matter that the things Schliemann unearthed and believed in men now hold to have belonged to a period a thousand years earlier than the Homeric Troy he sought, that only just before his death was he converted to the idea that Priam's mighty citadel lay in the sixth stratum from the virgin soil instead of in the third or second as at different times he affirmed? What matter that his spades at Mycenæ actually uncovered a dynasty much older than that of the Atreidæ? The marvellous story is not lessened because the science of archaeology has advanced since Schliemann's day. His glory remains, the glory of the dreamer who was also the realist.

Just as there will always be Baconians to ridicule the possibility that the Stratford player could write the greatest English literature, so we must expect to find a horde of impatient scholars irritated that Schliemann, the amateur, the merchant, the son of the German pastor, a man a trifle bombastic, as self-made men claim the right to be, should have captured recognition denied to many an archaeologist with manifold claims to it. We must admit that a fair measure of Schliemann's success with the public lay in his full appreciation of the power of advertising. He never let the public forget what he was doing. He failed frequently to wait for his final conclusions, preferring to think and learn in public. Where your trained scientist hesitates to be mistaken, Schliemann preferred being mistaken to being ignored.

Ludwig has had fuller personal records with which to deal in writing of Schliemann than can often have been his lot. On the other hand he was not faced with the problem of having his interpretation stand comparison with the work of other biographers. This is regrettable, inasmuch as it automatically puts the seal of authenticity on the work, and Ludwig, entertaining writer though he is, works according to a formula. He pronounces as an authority, but he bends facts to suit his premise. One feels throughout that in revealing Schliemann according to his definition he has done him less than justice. The whole portrait is here, but the emphasis is at least capable of argument. It is as though Ludwig had turned a strong gold light upon the man and as a result every quality, every act, yields itself tinged with the gold colour. The ideal, the dream, and the faith, are there, but the colour distorts them.

How is it possible to explain as a mere gold-seeker the man who hazards, for a dream, thousands and thousands of dollars to dig, not at a spot selected by an expert, but to dig in the dark, trusting to his own hunch, to risk himself and his wife, his money, his reputation, because of his trust that Homer was writing history? Nor was this risk undertaken in a mad moment of exaltation. Ludwig speaks truly when he says that Schliemann learned patience in the Orient. Years went by before he secured the Turkish firman, permitting him to risk his thousands of dollars. Moreover when he be-

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gan to dig in Greek soil, he had not even the inducement for a gold-seeker which existed at Troy, since every result of his digging must belong to the Greek government, and Schliemann was watched carefully to see that he obeyed this order. At Mycenæ he spent his own money, trusting again to his hunch as to the right place to dig, but without hope of anything more definite than the fame which comes from attack and dispute. We make no quarrel with Schliemann as a gold-seeker in his merchant days. It is hard to convince us that for the doubtful possibility of finding Priam's treasure—no matter how deep his belief in Homer—Schliemann worked in this second career which made his name famous. Something of the glory of the dreamer escapes Ludwig. Shall we forget that Schliemann never permitted his wife to wear jewelry because once he had hung upon her the gold ornaments he believed to have been worn by Helen of Troy?

DOROTHEA LAWRANCE MANN

DAWN *by Theodore Dreiser* (LIVERIGHT. $5.00)

AN autobiography in four volumes, *A History of Myself,* with the publication of *Dawn* is half completed. *Dawn,* however, as the title might indicate, is chronologically the first book. The second, dealing with Dreiser's journalistic experiences, was published by Boni & Liveright in 1922 under the title *A Book about Myself*. The present publisher in his fly-leaf notice of Dreiser's works now lists as the second volume a book called *Newspaper Days*. Evidently he is re-issuing the earlier work under a new title. If such is the case he owes the public a statement of the facts. *Dawn* is a volume of 589 pages. *A Book about Myself* contains 502. If we may expect Dreiser's loquacity to continue unchecked—and we may—the four volumes will run well over two thousand. All told we may anticipate by and about Dreiser upwards of a million words. . . .

Few will dispute that he is not only copious but verbose. He tells how during his cubship on a Chicago paper a friendly reporter used to blue-pencil his romantic effusions. He is no longer romantic, at least in the fashion of his youth; but if he ever learned anything about conciseness there is no indication of it. Besides wordiness *Dawn* exhibits all the other familiar faults of this extraordinary writer. Extraordinary a novelist must be who, possessing rare psychological insight, exact observation and great human compassion, is at the same time so incorrigibly diffuse, so intolerably ignorant of and so grossly tasteless in the use of words, so tiresomely reiterative of pet expressions ("but to return", "redolent of", "smacked of", "too" and "true", "religionists", "sex contacts", "chemisms", etc.), so humourless and heavy, and withal so incapable of the slightest improvement. The ugliness of his writing tends to loom after a time like a monstrous symbol of the ugly civilization which he chronicles. Only by resolutely ignoring the linguistic atrocities, as one does in reading a newspaper, can one get behind the expression to the matter.

That, indeed, is abundant. Like *A Book about Myself, Dawn* is crammed with incidents, many of them trivial but all vividly concrete—the stuff of a dozen novels. If only he had spared the reader his ponderous antimoral moralizings! To some it may seem also that he might have spared some of the more childish anecdotes. The adult life of the newspaper man and author is significant enough to justify such fulness; not a commonplace childhood. Of course the memories of his youth are irresistible—to the writer; and Dreiser may have felt that in his case the material was representative of mid-west America as well as psychologically explanatory of the man. We may grant such justifications and still feel that we could do with a deal less of it. It needs much less space to convince us that he has been all his life rebelling against the fanaticism of his "reli-

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gionist" father; that though frustrated by disillusionments, he still feels the warm sentiments which the boy felt for his mother; and that behind the naturalist's objectivity in telling of love there lurks the romantic sensuality which so engrossed the growing youth.

So far as sensuality is concerned, *Dawn* will no doubt appeal to a large audience of adolescents. The fervour which the father put into a puritanical Catholicism, the son devotes to advocating impure catholicity. In preaching and poetizing sex license he says what instinct is only too ready to accept, and he confesses his sexual experiences with the candour of a Casanova. Unfortunately the maundering, tongue-tied "Theo" was no Napoleon of the couch; and for addicts of the erotic his asinine and ineffectual "contacts" will probably prove as tantalizing as they are ridiculous. Most men are proud of sexual conquests, but it takes an extraordinary man to detail so calmly and copiously his sexual defeats. But with a philosophy like Dreiser's, why not?

As he puts it, "the mental and physical appetites of man alone explain him. He is, regardless of ideals or dreams or material equipment, an eating, savage animal, and in youth, and often in age, his greatest appetite, sex. And from that, as I have always said, and still stand prepared to maintain, arises all that we know . . . houses, temples, arts, travels and dreams of the world, its literature and its seekings. There is no other direct first cause for man". Furthermore, ". . . our follies are our life and what we are most willing to pay for. Yes, yes, yes! A thousand times yes! . . . By our follies . . . and inanities, we come to know what the sting of existence really means". And after all, what does anything matter? "What, cooking, eating, coition, job-holding, growing, aging, losing, winning, in so changeful and passing a scene as this, important? Bunk!"

With which devastating conclusion we may leave it.

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI *by Dorothy Margaret Stuart* (MACMILLAN. $1.50)

IN THIS, her second contribution to the *English Men of Letters* series Dorothy Stuart has given to the lovers of Christina Rossetti's verse, for the centenary year of her birth, a sympathetic study of the environment and the influences under which the greatest woman lyricist of the Victorians lived and wrote. With new sources to draw from, and a detachment possible after this lapse of time, Miss Stuart pictures the circle in which this quiet, self-contained woman moved, her friendships with authors and artists, and her two brief romances, the betrothal to the Pre-Raphaelite, James Collinson, and her love for Charles Bagot Cayley. The development of her work is traced from that first little volume of lyrics, the "Polidori book", which her grandfather printed privately in 1847, through her association with Pre-Raphaelite art and letters, and the desultory appearance of great lyrics that prepared the way for *Goblin Market and Other Poems*, which came out in 1862. Afterward followed, among others, *Sing-Song*, her cycle of child poems, many prose works, chiefly devotional, and the great sonnet sequences which Miss Stuart ranks above those of Mrs. Browning; but the first collected general edition of her poems did not appear until 1875. Miss Stuart's critical analysis of the poet's technique, of her wide prosodic range, and the influence of contemporaries upon her work, will interest scholars; and the general reader will be no less indebted for the quoted passages which so abundantly illustrate the text. (Perhaps, too, he will be glad to find a study of Christina Rossetti that is not chiefly devoted to Emily Dickinson.) Miss Stuart places some of the best-loved poems, such as *A Birthday* and *An Apple Gathering* in the Pre-Raphaelite category of her work; but she holds that it is to the great lyrics in which that influence is faint—to *Remember Me, The Round Tower at Jhansi, When I Am Dead,*

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My Dearest, and to the sonnets of *Monna Innominata*—that we must look for the austerer loveliness that characterizes Christina Rossetti's art.

MABEL SEYMOUR

ABRAHAM COWLEY: THE MUSE'S HANNIBAL *by Arthur H. Nethercot* (OXFORD. $4.75)

"COWLEY'S verse is in this century unread and unreadable." So wrote Arnold, and the words appear to express the state of Cowley's reputation today. He is probably remembered, by those who remember him at all, as one of the chief "metaphysical" poets—a term which, as Mr. Nethercot shows, needs to be understood historically and with some qualification. Yet while he lived, he was accounted by general consent the greatest poet of his time, and some went so far as to say of all time. Moreover, Arnold, if he had cared to, might have discriminated between the several kinds of verse which Cowley wrote, not all of which are "metaphysical" to an unreadable degree. John Donne, to whom Cowley is often assimilated, again without proper discrimination, as Mr. Nethercot shows, has of late undergone a considerable revival. A limited renaissance of Cowley may yet follow.

Mr. Nethercot's volume provides an admirable foundation for renewed interest in Cowley's remarkable life and work. It is an excellent union of scholarship with true biography. Its documentation is exhaustive, it is well written, it relates the complex life of a very gifted human being with the full interest that such a life ought to have, it preserves respect without sacrificing penetration. It is a portrait of the complete man, a figure in the round, embracing the wide range of Cowley's achievements and the considerable variety, almost confusion, of his traits and impulses.

The son of a stationer, one of the foremost examples of precocity in English letters, known for his poetry at thirteen, Cowley distinguished himself by a range of friendships which included Crashaw, the famous Dr. Harvey, John Evelyn, Jermyn (later the Earl of St. Albans), Will Davenant, and many others; and by a range of authorship which included, besides his famous "metaphysical" love poems and his "Pindaric" odes, a religious epic preceding Milton's, some lively ventures in writing for the stage, versified treatises on plants, and familiar essays which are among the early examples of this kind of composition in English. He was an innovator in versification and in criticism; his lively and progressive, if not very profound intelligence was active in the new movements of the time; he became a Doctor of Medicine; he was prominent in the inception of the Royal Society.

In life he was torn between conflicting desires. He aspired first to be "the Muse's Hannibal", to conquer new heights of poetry. Then he was drawn into the currents of the Royalist cause, and longed for advancement in active life. Disappointed at length in his hopes at court, he was enabled by faithful friends in high places to fulfil another early desire of retiring into the country and living in grave seclusion.

Whether or not a reversal of Arnold's verdict on Cowley's poems ever takes place, Mr. Nethercot has made a valuable contribution, I think, to literary biography. The life and character of Cowley deserve and repay the care and scholarship he has devoted to them. It is well that Cowley's poems, also, should be newly appraised. It is not likely that they could ever appeal to more than a very limited circle; but even if the auditors are few, Cowley's voice ought not to be universally forgotten. Such works as his ode to Hobbes deserve to be remembered, certainly, although they lead us to regret that he seldom struck off such lines of high simplicity as when he wrote:

To things immortal time can do no wrong.

THEODORE MORRISON

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VITTORIO ALFIERI: FORERUNNER OF ITALIAN NATIONALISM *by Gaudence Megaro* (COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS. $3.00)

VITTORIO ALFIERI (1749-1803), was famous during his life as a poet and dramatist, and Doctor Megaro has set himself the task of determining his status as a precursor of Italian nationalism. Of the celebrated amour with the Countess of Albany, Megaro has little to say, and of those erotic traits of genius which led Lombroso to regard Alfieri as a psychopathic study still less. The anti-Catholic tendencies which caused the Pope to place his *Satires, On Tyranny*, and *Autobiography* upon the Index of 1823 are explained in detail, however, along with the reasons for that thorough-going hatred of the French which developed during the years of Alfieri's intellectual maturity.

Alfieri's contributions to the reform of Italian letters are almost too well known to require comment; what is most characteristic, perhaps, is his belief in the high calling of the writer, his unshakable determination to inculcate virtue through his utterances, and to attack the forces of tyranny. Where Machiavelli had urged political measures to achieve independence from oppression, Alfieri saw the redemption of Italy effected through the agency of literature.

From a standpoint of historical development, Alfieri's most important rôle is that which he played in the story of Italian nationalism, and it is the validity of this rôle which Doctor Megaro establishes. Born the year after the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, and writing at a time when there was no Italy, but only the separate states of Savoy, Genoa, Venice, et cetera, Alfieri was one of the earliest apostles of Italian intellectual union. His conception of nationality presages that held by political scientists today: common language, literature, and traditions. And to him there could be no homeland without actual freedom:

> . . . the soil of your birth is never your *patria*
> Unless you are nursed there with milk of liberty.

The excellence of Doctor Megaro's study cannot be overestimated. Of great value to the student, it introduces the layman to that Alfieri who was an aristocrat, itinerant philosopher, lover, and tardy scholar, and demonstrates very clearly the debt owed him by the Italy of Mussolini and nationalism.

BETTY DRURY

THE NIGHT'S CANDLES *by René Roy* (MACMILLAN. $2.00)

THIS young French lieutenant—he was not quite twenty-three in 1917—had just been admitted to the Ecole Polytechnique when the war broke out. He was healthy, talented, ambitious, and he looked forward quite justifiably to a future bright with achievement. In the attack on the Chemin-des-Dames he received a wound which blinded him for life. At one stroke his future was shattered; he found himself condemned to grope forever in darkness, to live uselessly, to depend upon others for the smallest services.

René Roy is very reticent. He tells us little of the agony of spirit which followed the realization of his hopeless blindness. But in a single sentence he permits us to guess it. "I considered one after another all the possible methods of putting an end to my life, from the most classical to the most exaggerated." After horrible months in a hospital for the blind—how horrible, again, we are only allowed to guess—René Roy committed himself finally to life. He learned, painfully and with constant irritation at his slowness, to read Braille type, to write script by the use of hand-guides, to operate a typewriter. Since mathematics had always been a passion with him, he learned to perform complex mathematical operations in his head, to use the cubarithm and other calculating devices. Finally, by permission of the Ministry of War, he re-entered the Ecole Polytechnique. Today, fourteen years after he

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was blinded; he is active and successful as a state engineer of bridges and waterways. He is married, also, to a woman he has never seen, and has two children. In all ways humanly possible he has reconstructed for himself a normal life.

The reserve with which M. Roy has told his story will very likely be something of a disappointment to the student of psychology, but to the general reader it makes his struggle against darkness seem very real. Here, we may be quite sure, is no common self-exploitation, no artificial bid for the sympathy of strangers. Having achieved the goal of his spiritual Odyssey, M. Roy writes without bitterness, even though he is convinced that he need not have been totally blinded if his wound had received prompt surgical attention. Nor is he bitter over the unsurmountable deprivations of his life, over the fact that he will never see his wife, nor learn to know his children except through the descriptions of others. The conclusion of his narrative is an affirmation of faith. "Because I have sounded the depths of the most profound despair it is given man to know, I have slowly learned that one may take benefit from the most unfavourable events and may, by the persistency of his will, force them to serve him in the conduct of a worthwhile life, one not barren of satisfaction."

MARGARET WALLACE

GABRIEL THE ARCHANGEL *by Federico Nardelli and Arthur Livingston* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $3.50)

THE material of this volume is fascinating. The authors display rather questionable taste in referring always to D'Annunzio as the Archangel and they display rather frequently dismal lapses of style. But with all things admitted, the book is fascinating simply because a daring and reckless life makes a good story, and from earliest youth Gabriele d'Annunzio's life has been illumined by stupendous audacity and literary genius. The gifted youth was recognized as poet when he was barely sixteen years old. Hailed by critics as a master of Italian prose and verse (there is a delightful story that Pope Leo XIII rebuked faultfinders by declaring that D'Annunzio was the only man living who could write Italian), dazzling figure in Roman society, irresistible winner of hearts, creator of some marvellous passages of poetry which recall the inspired improviser of olden days, producer of some of the most characteristic *fin-de-siècle* novels, author of a long series of famous romantic dramas, associate of the greatest modern actress—the mere list of his achievements reads like the adventures of a fairy child. To all these details of social, journalistic, and literary activity, add D'Annunzio's participation in world affairs, and the mere recital becomes the tale of a modern superman. When Italy, long-time ally of Germany, was hesitating, the passionate appeals of D'Annunzio swayed his countrymen to demand affiliation with the Allies. It was natural that the author of the first great airplane story—*Forse Che Si, Forse Che No,* should become a spectacular aviator. Then like some smitten buccaneer of old, this poet, dramatist, and novelist became the conqueror of Fiume. Only one other living Italian can be mentioned in the same category because of the brilliance of his career. To Signore Mussolini's credit let it be repeated that he is using the national printing establishment for the definitive edition of his famous contemporary's books.

The sensibilities of a reader antipathetic to Latin impetuosity may be shocked on every page of this book, but students of contemporary literature will be indebted to this volume, and the general reader will be held by its sections—unadroitly presented as they are. The book serves as a rapid summary of an amazing activity in those fields so often joined in criticism, yet so often, unfortunately, separated in fact—the fields of life and letters.

CLARENCE STRATTON

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A VARIED SHELF

AMERICAN SOCIETY *by Charles Franklin Thwing* (MACMILLAN. $2.25)

DOCTOR THWING'S latest book, a reprint of contributions between 1911 and 1930 to the *Hibbert Journal*, is a good illustration of the kind of exposition which consists primarily in balancing pros and cons. The title of the first chapter, *The Best and the Worst in American Society*, is typical in method of those that follow. Americans enjoy a high degree of personal liberty, but they are nevertheless, on occasion, intolerant, lax, lawless and socially disintegrated; they have ideals but are sordid, they are efficient but nervously exhausted, they cherish the family but are given to divorce, they respect the Federal Government and disregard its laws, they are attentive to personal and community health while yielding to "shameless immoralities and disgusting sympathies", their education is superficial notwithstanding their liberal support of research, they cling to religion but are cursed with sects, "ignorant emotionalism", and a want of religious training in the home.

It is the same balancing of good and evil, better and worse, intelligent and rattleheaded, with most of the other aspects of American life that the ex-president of Western Reserve University discusses—the motive and contribution of the Pilgrims, the effect of the World War upon higher learning and the outlook for liberal education after the war, the state of public opinion between 1914 and 1917, the tests of a nation's civilization and America's ability to meet them, and the growth of political and social institutions. Everywhere, before he gets through, Doctor Thwing feels compelled to use both the front and the back of his canvas and turn the picture round and round lest, apparently, we should fancy that either side was the whole story. The net effect is a bit wearisome, but Doctor Thwing is a shrewd if not broad observer, his reflections upon the passing show are often pointed and always sensible, and his optimism is more in evidence than are his regrets. For readers who like to have criticism voiced in a hopeful tone, but without too positive a forecast of what may happen, the book should prove a healthy rehearsal of memories and a modest incentive to persevere.

MEXICAN MAZE *by Carleton Beals* (LIPPINCOTT. $3.00)

FEW Americans know Mexico as well as Carleton Beals, and in *Mexican Maze* he has done his finest work in describing the country and its people and analyzing their problems. The form of the book is skilfully contrived to win immediate interest. In place of the stereotyped account of Mexico and its history followed by sketches of its social peculiarities and summarized reviews of its literature and art, Mr. Beals devotes the first half of his volume to a series of fascinating pictures of Mexican life, principally among the Indians, of personal experiences in remote regions where he has wandered without haste, of fiestas and religious celebrations and generals and healers, all rich in colour and alive with the very spirit of a unique and little-known culture. Such passages as those which describe the fiesta at Tehuantepec, the day of the Virgin at Guadalupe-Hidalgo, the unworldly simplicity of Amecameca and Milpa Alta, the life of the muleteer, the fierce

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independence of the Yaquis, the local autocracy of Don Melchor, and the wild exploits of Don José Avellaneda are notable examples of vivid writing. No one who has read this first half will need incentive to read the second.

The chief characteristic of the book is its emphasis upon the contrasts which Mexico everywhere displays, and which largely contribute to its charm. In politics it is the contrasted personalities and policies of Juarez, Diaz, Madero, Obregon, Calles and other leaders; in religion, between the devotion of the masses and the degradation of the church; in Amecameca, between the drowsy calm of life in a village overshadowed by the enormous volcanoes of Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl and the fatalism of a community that has "resigned itself to ultimate extinction" and turns "the mere flirt of a *sarape* over the shoulder" into a "baffling gesture" at once proud and sad; and in the country as a whole the contrast between the "at least two score separate Indian peoples" and the pressure of alien exploiters.

The seventy-five examples of Diego Rivera's work with which the book is illustrated set off what is said about Mexican art, especially caricature, although not all judges would agree with Mr. Beals that Rivera, rather than Orozco, is "the greatest painter of the epoch". Mr. Beals sees in the "literature of revolution", of which the works of Guzman are perhaps the highest examples, a definite tearing loose from the European current. "It is a national literature. . . . Mexico has become important enough, dramatic enough, terrible enough, for its writers to seek native themes, native characters, native style, and tell the story in a native way."

Long journalistic experience stands Mr. Beals in good stead when he comes to trace the tortuous course of recent Mexican politics and the amazing history, discreditable enough to the United States and certain of its citizens, of the struggle over oil. He is obviously anxious as he looks toward the future. American capital will inevitably overrun Mexico, bringing with it the factories and other accompaniments of the machine age and envisaging war with the United States "either as a prelude or an epilogue to economic penetration". For the moment, he thinks, war is not imminent, but it remains always a possibility. Upon the United States the effects of annexation would be bad: fifteen million dark-skinned people, all Catholics, added to the population would intensify racial and religious problems, "profoundly alter the character of American institutions, lower living standards, and probably ultimately lead to the downfall of American democratic practices". Mexico would get better sanitation and a quickened economic life, but "we would crush many vital and beautiful things in the Mexican cultures; at the same time the people would organize against us, and in the end Mexico would carve out its independence anew". The better way—it is Mr. Beals's final word—is "not conquest but mutual tolerance; not strife but coöperation; not blind egoism but even-handed participation in the benefits of both cultures; not slavery but common freedom".

WILLIAM MACDONALD

THE FLIGHT FROM REASON *by Arnold Lunn* (DIAL PRESS. $3.50)

THE distinguished scientist who undertakes to expose to the layman the intricacies of the physical universe is undoubtedly engaged in a legitimate form of education. The trouble is that the layman is not much interested in unadorned science; he wants a science which is picturesque, not equations and formulae, but fantastic tales about how our world would appear to a man in an express elevator on the moon. These requirements have been most ably met by the English popularizers of science, one or two of whom have written with clarity and even with charm. The layman is amused by the dramatization of scientific theories, but his interest is most

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eagerly aroused by the "significance" of modern science in explaining problems of religion and morals, and partly to satisfy this demand and partly to comply with their own inclinations several learned writers have taken upon themselves to speak not merely as the philosopher but even as the priest. After all it is easier to hold the reader's attention by explaining the meaning of the world than it is to make plain details like the structure of the atom. The authority with which the learned physicist can write on entirely religious matters is hardly challenged by the once-majestic voices of bishops, and the public forgets that the physicist's expert knowledge is not in religion. It is fair to ask how much this kind of popular writing does to promote understanding of the aims, methods, and limitations of science, and how much it does to encourage the belief that the physicist is by the nature of his calling a pious and God-fearing man and that romance and religion are certain to be found in the laboratory. Such writing is beyond question largely responsible for the confusion introduced into all criticism of science by creating a pretentious, romantic, and religious science as opposed to the laborious method which painstaking men practise daily in their work.

In the *Flight from Reason* Mr. Arnold Lunn sets out to scrutinize and define the scientists' claims. He makes little distinction between the two kinds of science, and no matter how absurd the statement made by no matter what writer he takes it as a fair representation of the intention and method of science herself. In particular he attacks what he calls the Victorian heresy, "that everything is measurable, and that nothing which is not measurable is real". He thinks he finds among the Victorian scientists a definite bias against theism, and he even goes so far as to say that these men thought it was "their duty to deprive their fellow men of the consolations of religion". To be sure it is not difficult to find absurdities in Darwin and Huxley. Darwin was conscious of the expectations and prejudices of his popular audience, and was trying to adapt himself so that he could do justice to his arguments and at the same time influence thought. It is all very well to collect, as does Mr. Lunn, the boastful and arrogant remarks of scientists provoked by clash or agreement with the public mind, but these remarks are bound to be of the moment and no one can seriously suppose that Darwin and Huxley are remembered today because of these remarks and that the rest of their work has perished. Mr. Lunn does not make the distinction between what the scientist actually does and what he says he does and can do.

Doubtless much nonsense can be talked about venturing outside one's special field, but Mr. Lunn is so obviously not at home in his subject that he can win little confidence from his reader. For his historical sections, where he traces the development of science from Socrates to Lamarck, he is quite frankly drawing from obvious secondary sources and his own résumé lacks the only virtues possible, clarity and order. He descends to irrelevancies when, for instance, he impugns Darwin's honesty as a scientist. Although he makes sport of Darwin's literary gifts he is himself content to write simple little sentences in one sentence paragraphs. Compared with the witty treatment of much the same subject in Ronald Knox's *Caliban in Grub Street*, the *Flight from Reason* is both superficial and confused.

THEODORE BAIRD

THE MARTIAL SPIRIT *by Walter Millis* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $4.00)

THE Spanish-American War should never have been fought and probably never would have been except for a series of accidents and the goading of an unrestrained press, seeking circulation, and of the jingoes and imperialists of Congress. Ultimately, the occupant of the White House, that opportunist

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with "no more backbone than a chocolate éclair", was forced to assume the rôle of a War President. The perspective of a generation permits us to see more clearly the *opéra bouffe* between the decaying empire of Spain and the young, still gawky American Republic. Of the war itself, both on land and sea, the least said the better. Against almost any nation except Spain the amazing inefficiency and incapacity of both arms of the American service would have meant disaster. But the Lord looks out for his people, and the care bestowed upon the United States in 1898 makes even a confirmed sceptic almost accept the belief in manifest destiny. A war which constantly bordered on fiasco would not tend to make for imperishable reputations; the war with Spain was no exception. Only Theodore Roosevelt seemed to profit, and Mr. Millis's analysis of the part played by the leader of the Rough Riders makes it apparent that even his reputation is none too secure. But the war for *Cuba libre* was soon over, and although it left Cuba free, it found the United States possessed with "dominion over pine and palm", ready to step forth and take its place among the powers of the world. In spite of the fun poked at our conduct of the war and the frank criticism of governmental policy, the author has given honour where due, and in many instances, notably in the case of Secretary of War Alger, reverses the unfavourable verdict of earlier opinion. *The Martial Spirit* is one of the most interesting historical works of the current year.

E. FRANCIS BROWN

CALIBAN IN AFRICA *by Leonard Barnes* (LIPPINCOTT. $3.00)

I DO NOT know anything about Mr. Barnes except what may be learned from the jacket of his strangely entitled book *Caliban in Africa*—strangely entitled because his native hardly deserves to be classed with Caliban and he certainly would not compare the Afrikander to Prospero. He would not, that is to say, unless he dislikes Prospero, which may be, of course. Although apart from the fact that Mr. Barnes has lived five years in South Africa and is at present assistant editor of the Johannesburg *Star*, I know nothing of him, I strongly suspect that in writing this book either he has had an axe to grind or else he has rushed in where many might well fear to tread. But the former assumption would not do justice to the apparent excellence of his heart nor the latter to the clearness of his head.

It is better, therefore, having stated these misgivings, to take the book for what it is—a journalist's popular and somewhat oversimplified account of the most serious problem in South Africa today, presented dramatically and with a certain amount of unnecessarily fine writing. What, for example, does the following contribute to our understanding of Africa? "To speak frankly, her respectability is in doubt. She will display her undisciplined allurements with something of the strumpet's calculation, going to men's heads like wine and escorting them thus, with music and fatal pomp of flowers, to lasting ruin. When she has drained a client of manhood and wealth, and the hour of waning love is upon her, she will discard him without pity and without thanks." This, let us repeat, is a description of Africa.

If one is disposed to suspect Mr. Barnes of axe-grinding, it is because his book is a *roman à thèse*, or more precisely *à anti-thèse*, if there is such a thing. For he is very much against the Dutch and against the present Government of South Africa. There has been a good deal of sentimentalizing about the Boers, and for that some of the things which Mr. Barnes brings to our attention are an effective antidote. His attitude towards the Afrikander's policy may, on the other hand, be due simply to the fact that it is far easier to say what is the matter with any given solution of the colour problem than it is to suggest a better one, as every American

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born south of Mason and Dixon's Line knows. Mr. Barnes recognizes this himself when it is necessary for him to offer something constructive. He does give some indication, however, of the lines on which a solution is to be looked for in speaking of property and educational tests for the franchise: "Where . . . black and white live together, the superficial similarity the test insists upon is so disproportionate to the enormous and profound dissimilarity it ignores that the system becomes a pretense. 'Equal rights for all civilized men' was a useful cry at a time when the only alternative was an even cruder distinction of race and colour. But logically it cannot hold water, because no adequate differentia of civilization is discoverable. . . . The modern need is for a principle which not only recognizes equalities between the races, where they exist, but also takes into just account the much more important inequalities".

With some reserves, *Caliban in Africa* may be taken as an inside picture of South Africa today, affording a vivid realization of one of the central problems of South Africa and of the British Empire. To an American the South African race problem seems simpler and more clear-cut, if more acute, than ours. At any rate, it is receiving more enlightened consideration from one party than ours has ever received; and it is possible, though Mr. Barnes regards a catastrophe as imminent, that a plan may be worked out from a broad Imperial viewpoint. We may thus learn something even from a popular and rather one-sided exposition.

JAMES ORRICK

THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF RELIGION *by W. Schmidt* (DIAL PRESS. $5.00)

INTENDED to be used as "a manual of the comparative history of religion", this extremely systematic and thoroughly documented treatise is based on the author's three-volume work, *Ursprung der Gottesidee* (1912-1930). Father Schmidt describes his present summary as one providing, in addition to its outline of origins, a history of past theories, and finally a history of "growth"—the succession of religions and cultures in the order of their appearance.

By way of introduction, the necessary definitions are laid down. There follow, first an outline history of the entire subject (as denominated in the title) up to the present day of "critical realism", and next a slightly more detailed consideration of the forerunners of the comparative method. The theories of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries are considered in order: nature-myths, fetishism, ghost-worship, and animism—from Lessing and Max Müller to Spencer and Tylor; star-myths, totemism, and magic—from Winckler to Frazer and Freud.

The last hundred odd pages (out of nearly three hundred in all) reveal the main thesis: that a "true monotheism" was the religion of all known primitive peoples, an "essential property of the most ancient of human cultures". The corroborative testimony of many writers is presented, from Andrew Lang's early championing of the "high gods of low races", to such recent contributions as those of Nieuwenhuis in Holland and of Radin and Lowie in America. Professor H. J. Rose's translation is exceptional, not only for its excellent English, but for notes correcting or supplementing "small points of detail" in the original.

HANSELL BAUGH

THE HISTORY OF FUNDAMENTALISM *by Stewart G. Cole* (R. R. SMITH. $2.50)

THE term fundamentalism was coined by an unofficial Baptist journal in 1920. And, as we all know, it was quickly taken up by every newspaper in the country and cannot be said at any time of its brief popularity to have possessed much intellectual significance. Doctor Cole painstakingly defines it as "the organized determination of conservative

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churchmen to continue the imperialistic culture of historic Protestantism within an inhospitable civilization dominated by secular interests and a progressive Christian idealism". The opponents of fundamentalism, the modernists, he describes as "those churchmen who attempted the task of redefining Christianity to meet the conditions of shifting culture", and elsewhere he traces the origin of modernism, or "liberal Christianity", to "such churchmen as fraternized with secular idealism". He then proceeds, with a documentary zeal that is nothing short of astonishing, to relate the history of the encounters between the two factions, and, since he is a modernist himself, to drive the final nail into the fundamentalist coffin. Baptists, Presbyterians, Disciples, Methodists, Episcopalians —each of these denominations had its own form of the controversy; and Doctor Cole has told us all that we could very well desire to know about it. The hurried rise and fall of fundamentalism is here set forth for all time, for in spite of his own liberalism Doctor Cole is strictly impersonal.

AMERICAN TYPES *by James Oppenheim* (KNOPF. $2.50)

THE sub-title to this book is *A Preface to Analytic Psychology*. Mr. Oppenheim, who appears to have served as a lay psychiatrist, acknowledges his indebtedness to Doctor Carl Jung and the Zurich School, particularly to Jung's *Psychological Types*. After a brief résumé of the positions of Freud ("All is Sex") and Adler (Will-to-Power) Mr. Oppenheim sketches the principal contributions made by Jung: his theory of the "collective unconscious", which attempts to cope with religious and inspirational phenomena; and above all his famous division of mankind into two adverse types, the introvert and the extravert. "This division into two types", however, "is further complicated by a splitting up into functional types—the functions being thinking, feeling, intuition and sensation, and various function-combinations giving us theoretically sixteen human types, each quite different from the other, whether introverted or extraverted, masculine or feminine." Working upon this basis, Mr. Oppenheim proceeds to examine what he calls "the American race". He finds, for example, that President Hoover is "an extraverted thinking-with-sensation type", while Mrs. Hoover is "extraverted feeling-with-intuition". Our financiers, poets, inventors, journalists, and prize-fighters are similarly put in their places. The great majority of those mentioned are our newspaper "personalities"—Lindbergh, Greta Garbo, Dwight Morrow, Gene Tunney, Clarence Darrow, Ruth Elder, Mrs. Coolidge, Aimee McPherson, Graham McNamee; and all are taken at their face value.

The following is an example of Mr. Oppenheim's scientific approach. He is discussing the imposing subject of extraverted intuition: "A woman-intuitive glancing at a man she has just met penetrates his outer mask and sees into him. He appears, say, nothing much: but she reads an inner power. She sees, besides, possibilities. She sees in him a budding artist or politician or what-you-will, who will, if encouraged, go far". It might be noted, though this passage is not so illustrative as others, that Mr. Oppenheim favors the use of a breezy "American language". In this, as well as in many other ways, he pays tribute to "the Right Hon. H. L. Mencken", whom he also calls the "Sage of Baltimore". The book will interest those who are too "intelligent" for horoscopes.

GERALD SYKES

NEW RUSSIA'S PRIMER *by M. Ilin* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $1.75)

THIS book is the story of the Five-Year Plan written for text-book use in the Russian elementary schools. This engineer-author, without propaganda or political bias, merely sets forth what the plan is and what it pro-

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poses to do and employs the simplest language and illustration. The excellent translation is by G. S. Counts.

As a story of anticipation and remarkable effort toward national industrialization, the primer makes interesting reading. Adapted with striking ability to the mind of children, it graphically pictures the coal, metal, forest and agricultural resources of Russia and makes of their conquest by Soviet leaders no dull statistical report but a romantic and absorbing story.

The simplicity of the story is delightful, the great industrial ideal inspiring. But the utterly fantastic nature of the material is not unlike the visions Francis Bacon saw in some of his "advancements" of science. Practically everything is dealt with in the future tense. The primer, outside its fine descriptions of man's struggle with natural forces, is what Russia, in the Soviet dream, *will* be. Extend the statements of this little book into the future and Russia will be a blessed land where everybody will work for the common good, where leisure will be spent productively, where eternal sunshine will shine on a happy and economically secure populace. It is a fairy-story told in terms of iron, coal and wheat. It is a scientific and industrial Utopia in which "No longer will there be bent backs, strained muscles, inflated veins in the forehead". Instead, "after socialism is built . . . healthy, strong giants, red-cheeked and happy—such will be the new people. . . . Socialism is no longer a myth, a phantasy of the mind. We ourselves are building it".

Thus the children are told of the wonders of socialism and urged to do their utilitarian bit for the common good. It is a beautiful, fascinating story, told with the gentleness that catches the childish mind. Apparently, it matters little that the children who read this story of the Five-Year Plan will emerge from school to find themselves along with their elders the slaves, not of machines or improvident capitalists, but of a small group of Communists firmly seated in Moscow.

The larger political and social aspects of Sovietism, however, have nothing to do with this primer. It is merely the anticipated Russian industrial plan told through the haze of Communist idealism in simple and effective language. It makes pleasant reading.

FREUD AND HIS TIME *by Fritz Wittels* (LIVERIGHT. $4.00)

THIS book is important not because of the originality or excellence of its material but because it is one of the best statements of the Freudian theories yet to appear in English. Freud himself is extremely difficult in translation and his American popularizers have added little to the understanding of his work. But here comes Fritz Wittels, devoted pupil of the Viennese psychologist, with a gift for expression, a clear view of the psycho-analytic field, an imaginative power, and a courage—all of which are commendably effective in presenting so complicated a subject as psycho-analysis.

We insist then at the outset that the book is eminently readable and, we believe, authentic. It is more than a rehash of vague theories and more than a piling up of partly explained case-histories. Here is the whole gaudy panorama of Freudianism, historically, philosophically and imaginatively presented. Herr Wittels generalizes freely and effectively, and one closes the book with a conviction that, whether these theories are sound or not, here is perhaps the best English volume on psycho-analysis for the layman.

As for the truth of Freudian theories with their pan-sexualism and absurd simplification of all human activity in the pleasure principle and the id (the unconscious)—that is a different matter.

Freudian psychology is based on a dualism which emerges from the monistic unconscious. This dualism is known variously. On the one side, it is the primary, the feminine, the emotional, the hysterical, the creative principle; on the other side, it is the second-

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ary, the masculine, the intellectual, the compulsive, the critical principle. The first emerges from the unconscious mind, the second from the conscious.

Now psycho-analysis in the Freudian-Wittels sense consists in taking a human action and breaking it down into unit materials and then building up an explanation which accords with that original assumption of the pleasure principle operating always in sex. The analysis with its labelling of conscious and unconscious elements is the valuable part of Freudian psychology. There is no question about the great contribution to scientific knowledge here. But it is our opinion that the Freudian synthesis, the explanation, is a mass of faulty monoptic observation and allegiance to unsound assumptions. So long as Wittels analyzes, he is on firm and constructive ground; but when he synthesizes, his fine system of Oedipus complexes, instinct transformations, "libidinal cathexes", and rigid dualism of the hysterical and the compulsive comes clattering down—an edifice built entirely on the most fantastic theories shot through with utterly subrational prejudice.

For instance, there is Wittels's ludicrous effort to fit everything into the Procrustean bed of compulsive-hysterical, masculine-feminine polarity based on some form of sex—heterosexualism, homosexualism, narcissism. According to Wittels, God and eroticism are both emergences from the primary element of the id; Aristotle's eudemonism is a neurotic phobia inspired by Eros; culture is simply a sublimation of "the homosexual residue of our libido"; painters such as Raphael and Titian are persons struggling with anal complexes; actors are afflicted with sexual exhibitionism; love is a form of sexual hypnosis; and a judge is society's symbol of revenge who is granted the special privilege of wreaking his sadism on the unresponsible criminals whom "we unconsciously envy and admire". Whether they are aware of it or not, the psycho-analysts are almost entirely on the side of that chaotic and ambivalent factor, the id. By neglecting the libidos of power and knowledge, which are traditionally accepted as being on a par with sex, they over-simplify human action; by distrusting reason and its attempt to achieve a balance, they throw themselves directly on the side of the subrationalists. Herr Wittels believes that Freud, who led the "Hell hound out of Hades" (that is, freed the id), and Einstein, who has slain "the dragon of the compulsive-neurotic" (that is, any one who says "must" or "it is so"), are "worthy of reverence".

It appears to us that the central error in psycho-analysis lies not only in its inability to conceive of the will in its proper place as a restrictive force between instinct and intellect but in placing it definitely in the primary function, saying "The authority which compels us from within we feel as freedom. . . . The problem of the freedom of the will cannot be solved with the intellect. The roots of inner freedom are hidden in the primary function". Thus the pan-sexualism of the psycho-analyst and his cult of the primary function place him under suspicion of vast error in reading human character.

Because of the clarity of his writing, Herr Wittels is able to present both the strength and the weakness of his theories. A reader will find the book a fascinating recital of monstrosities if not of wisdom.

ALAN BURTON CLARKE

ALTERNATIVES TO WAR *by Florence Guertin Tuttle* (HARPERS. $3.00)

THIS is the sort of book which is most discouraging to the friends of peace. On the strength of regular attendance at League Assemblies and lectures, acquaintance with some of the more carefully syndicated statesmen, and a lot of high ideals, Miss Tuttle plunges into the conclusion that she has found "what are the practical alternatives to war . . . alternatives that nations may use without the loss of national honour". These are, in her opinion, the League of Nations,

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the International Labour Office (!), the so-called World Court, the Locarno Treaties, and the Kellogg-Briand Pact.

All of these institutions and engagements are admirable—though the International Labour Office is not generally reckoned as part of the world's peace apparatus—but they are apparatus, not alternatives to anything. The alternative to the League method of consultation is not war, but diplomacy; the alternative to the World Court is and has been for some time arbitration; the Locarno Treaties and the Multilateral Pact are engagements to seek peaceful solutions, not the guarantee of satisfactory solutions.

To digress slightly, the world's only hope of preventing war is to devise a means of securing international justice, if necessary at the expense of the status quo. It is a curious fact that the most vigorous adherents of peace, as well as the most vigorous opponents of any revision of the status quo, are the powers which owe their present predominance to war. The theory that those who take to the sword must perish by the sword is a disturbing one to all victors. The alternative to war is not peace, but justice, the devising of means to redress unjust settlements, to revise unjust treaties, to accord recognition to the principles of growth and decay in international life. To devise means for curbing the aggressor is, essentially, to warn nations with a grievance that the international dice are once again, as in the time of Metternich, loaded against innovators.

This is the point which all American pro-Leaguers seem to overlook. The United States is more than ready to throw its weight on the side of peace. It is not prepared to have its great power and influence used to buttress particular territorial and political settlements which might otherwise be subject to peaceful readjustments.

But Miss Tuttle is too earnest and too artless an enthusiast to be held fairly responsible for this defect in international society. She has talked to Mr. Sweetzer, to Mr. Arthur Bullard, has heard Professor Zimmern, has read Señor de Madariaga, and has observed Viscount Cecil and M. Briand at work. She is entirely right in condemning the American reliance upon farthing-dip diplomacy and outworn traditions. When she pleads for a more vigorous American international attitude she is on sound ground and worth attention.

Some of her points are in error, as when she says that prior to the Washington Conference Japan was irritated by the "restriction of our new immigration laws", which were not enacted until three years later. She subscribes to Professor Parker Moon's ascription to us of a colonial empire of 911,000 square miles, when, even with Alaska, all of our outlying possessions are much less in area. She believes that the United States left "her allies" at the peace table, when we fought war and made peace without alliances of any sort and when Colonel House was prepared to stop fighting before the Armistice if the British did not agree to the Freedom of the Seas, and she concludes that "there is enough machinery existing today to keep the peace of the world *if the peoples want peace*". If the peoples want peace, there is no need for machinery. If the peoples want war, we don't know whether the machinery we have evolved will be worth a hang. If the victors use the threat of war (whether they call it "sanctions" or any other fancy name) to preclude any substantial justice to the world's suppressed nations and races, the popular desire for peace will be neither strong nor long maintained. We do not need a "peace psychology" so much as we need a guarantee of justice, and there is as yet no big nation in the world today which is prepared to give that guarantee in a sense which would admit international jurisdiction over its domestic actions. Such books as *Alternatives to War* are valuable in showing the extent to which an enthusiast can be led away from the real crisis in international relations by the highest ideals. As

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a contribution to the solution of that crisis, it is about as important as was the Children's Crusade in winning back the Holy Sepulchre from the Moslems.

JOHN CARTER

SON OF WOMAN: THE STORY OF D. H. LAWRENCE *by John Middleton Murry* (CAPE & SMITH. $3.50)

WHEN D. H. Lawrence died, astounding obituary notices in the English press referred briefly and spitefully to the miner's son whose literary gift had "unfortunately" been marred by "certain obsessions". Stories were current at the time of British newspaper proprietors who hastily telephoned their editors and ordered that no favourable reference whatever should be allowed in any mention of this writer. Here and there a few brave voices challenged this attitude on the part of that influential section of the community which, generally, subscribes heartily to gentlemanliness and the rule that of the dead only good should be spoken. But there was a quality in Lawrence that aroused fear and hatred of a singular kind: he was not to be forgiven. Though we may snigger in private over the only portions of Lawrence's work (and Freud's and Joyce's) that we can understand, we must demonstrate that we are not going to stand for *that* kind of thing.

Middleton Murry was a friend of Lawrence. In his editorial capacity a man of distinction, he had early and late appreciated Lawrence's work. It seemed fitting that he should be the one to write the customary book in which an account of the life of a recently dead author is combined with an appreciation of his literary quality. But when Murry sat down to perform this last act of friendship he too, it seems, heard *de mortuis nil nisi malum* ring in his ears. He explains that years ago Lawrence asked that Murry should "not betray" him. Consequently, Lawrence should understand that Murry had to let everyone know what was wrong in order that it should be evident what a great but wholly mistaken man Lawrence was.

No one will deny that in performing this strange labour of love and repudiation Murry has been industrious. He has selected innumerable quotations from Lawrence's work and interpreted them at great length. We are to know that Lawrence was quite right and quite wrong. What was wrong was that Lawrence was a great lover and let himself go, but he never let himself go because he was afraid and so he was never a great lover: and this applies whether we consider his love for women or for men or for all humanity. His sexual life was all wrong because he was not courageous. In spite of that, he was very courageous and everyone must take him as a model and love as he loved, being careful, however, to beware of the dangers. If Lawrence had listened to Murry he might have been a great leader.

Now all of this is of interest if one were anxious to learn more about Murry. Otherwise the only remedy for the acute distress *Son of Woman* provokes is to turn to Lawrence's work. Suddenly the world opens in beauty and richness. There are young people on the water. "The lovely darkness fell again, the lanterns and little threaded lights glimmered softly, there was a muffled knocking of oars and a waving of music." There is "a light little cowslip child" in a garden by the downs. A woman stares with contempt and passion at the man she is to marry. The painful straining of his heart tells a young man that, all unwillingly, he loves the girl he has just dragged from a stagnant pond. The station-master helps his wife peg out the washing on the clothes-line in the meadow.

It is a variable world; one that Lawrence accepted with its dark places, clumsiness and betrayals. Can it be, perhaps, that though Murry did not understand Lawrence, Lawrence understood Murry and that *Son of Woman* is in revenge of this?

IRIS BARRY

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A NEW MODEL OF THE UNIVERSE *by P. D. Ouspensky* (KNOPF. $7.50)

IN that vast realm ruled by Philosophy, there is an obscure hinterland where one man's copper is another man's gold. The province lies in that historical domain known as Theosophy or Occultism; and P. D. Ouspensky, author of *Tertium Organum*, has returned from his travels there with a new book entitled *A New Model of the Universe*. It would take a wise man indeed to make a competent assay of his latest finds. Somewhere in the course of his immense volume of over five hundred pages, Ouspensky, in speaking of occult literature in general, remarks: "Side by side with valuable and interesting material they contain a great deal of rubbish, which is characteristic of occult literature in general". May it not be that out of his own mouth the author has convicted this modernized version of Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled*?

Characteristic of occult literature in general is his method, which consists in interpolating an occult conclusion after several pages of truisms; so that we allow the "rider", so to speak, to pass unnoticed in the true bill of particulars. Then with the consummate art of simplicity, and by means of guarded allusions and hints of magical insights, the fortifications of reason are gradually broken down and we yield to the onrush of poetry and fancy masquerading as sober fact. "The laws of time and space", Ouspensky thinks, "are irrational laws. . . . In order to understand them one must be able to think irrationally and without facts." And so he invents a six-dimensional space and a world of interconnected spirals, which may be an interesting speculation; but how much predictability does it possess, what purpose does it serve? The game of inventing theories may be fascinating, but it is a game notwithstanding.

The book nevertheless deserves reading as a beautiful fairy-tale; and so long as the reader throws the necessary safeguards around the breastworks of reason, the book will do no damage and may indeed act as a delightful tonic to the imagination. Yet the simplicity and apparent sincerity of mind that Ouspensky exhibits are so great and his genius at self-deception is so infectious that one may almost safely predict his destined rise as a major contemporary prophet of occultism.

CHARLES ELSTEIN

LIAISON *by Brigadier-General E. L. Spears* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $5.00)

HERE is a book which is unique among the English or American records of the Great War. We have had books written by soldiers, by journalists, by masters of literary style, but no books in which the writer was all three at once. Now at last from the pen of General Spears we have such a book, a book which the present writer read through twice in three days.

At the beginning of the war, General Spears, then a young lieutenant, was British liaison officer at the headquarters of the French Fifth Army, and therefore had an unrivalled opportunity of viewing those days between the opening of the battle of Charleroi on August 22, 1914, to the retreat of the Germans at the Marne on September 9, 1914. Fortunately, however, he possessed more than mere opportunity. In "*1914*" Field-Marshal French speaks of Lieutenant Spears thus: "I seldom knew him at fault. He was a perfect master of the French language and was popular with the staffs, and made welcome by the various generals to whom he was attached. His unfailing tact, judgement and resource were very marked. His reckless, daring courage often made me anxious for his safety, and, indeed, he was severely wounded on at least five separate occasions".

The strategy of the opening campaign General Spears makes beautifully clear. He does not mince matters in speaking of General Joffre's terrible miscalculation about the enemy and the place of the main attack, and

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he shows that General Lanrezac became aware of the real state of affairs before the Generalissimo. And yet Joffre is the real hero of the book, he and the common French soldier. He makes it plain that but for Joffre's patience, courage and clarity of view, and above all his tact and honesty in dealing with General French, the battle of the Marne would never have occurred.

Nothing more moving in the literature of the war has been written than General Spears's account of Joffre's final appeal to French before the Marne, an appeal which brought tears into the eyes of all, including the eyes of French himself. Spears was present and saw Joffre at the conclusion of the exposition of his plan turn to French and, clasping his own hands until they hurt, cry: "Monsieur le Maréchal, c'est la France qui vous supplie", and then saw the Field-Marshal after vainly trying to express his feelings in French turn to Major Clive and stammer "Damn it, I can't explain. Tell him that all that men can do our fellows will do". That the Marne was Joffre's victory and not Galliéni's, General Spears proves conclusively, though Galliéni played an honourable part. He defends too the part played by the British, showing that it was their advance into the rear of the German First Army which determined Von Kluck's retreat.

But perhaps even more interesting than the purely military portion of the book are General Spears's vignettes of the various French leaders. His picture of General Lanrezac, the accomplished theoretical strategist, far-seeing before the event, peevish, mistrustful, and flabby as the crisis approached, redeeming himself momentarily only at the battle of Guise which he fought under the eyes of Joffre himself, and then on the eve of the Marne being displaced by the indomitable Franchet D'Esperey, is a tragic masterpiece. Splendidly done too is his portrait of D'Esperey, a figure of vigour and confidence, who to break up a blockade used to fire his revolver from the window of his car. But perhaps most perfect of all is his description of General De Maud'huy, who, loving the theatre, had forty years before vowed a vow that never until the French reëntered his native city of Metz would he enter a playhouse, and who kept that vow until the day when as Governor of Metz he went at last to the theatre preceded by twenty trumpeters! This and half a dozen other anecdotes Spears tells of De Maud'huy, who becomes under his pen, as indeed he was, a veritable hero of romance. And then, final and supreme comes Joffre, magnificent in his rock-like strength, simple, gentle, slow to anger, but terrible when at last aroused, the man of men France needed at the time, not a genius, but perhaps the one man who could have turned the retreat into the triumph of the Marne. It is in the portraits of these figures that General Spears shows himself a master of the written word. For these pages alone, *Liaison* will be read as long as men read of the Great War.

GRENVILLE VERNON

THE ARISTOCRATIC JOURNEY: BEING THE OUTSPOKEN LETTERS OF MRS. BASIL HALL *edited by Una Pope-Hennessy* (PUTNAM. $5.00)

WHEN Mrs. Basil Hall came to America in 1827, with her baby, Elizabeth, and her sailor husband, she was very happy to arrive on firm ground. They had an average crossing —thirty-six days; but the baby had been ill and the nurse had been ill and Mrs. Hall had been ill and the sailor husband had been hard put to it to look after them all. Moreover, by the time they were halfway over, they had run out of towels, soda water, cordials and crackers. Land was undeniably welcome.

Yet right from the beginning Mrs. Hall was harking back to Edinburgh and the pleasures of Edinburgh society; and, to keep one foot over the sea, she was writing voluminous letters on all she saw to the sister who had stayed at home. She was an acute ob-

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server, and her slight touch of nostalgia, while it made her critical of what she saw, at least gave her a standard of comparison. It is often astonishing to notice how much that she commented on still remains, after a hundred years, to draw the attention of the stranger. In New York "the people are so extremely locomotive in their habits that they seldom remain more than a year in a house". American men, instead of offering their arms and leading her, took her by the elbow and steered her. They were surprisingly quick eaters; and even in the best houses she was often required to keep her fork over from one course to another. Her hosts were very anxious to please her, but they were still more anxious that their efforts should be approved. They were far more interested in America than in England or Scotland; and, really, at times Mrs. Hall felt a little sore. All the time she was remembering England, and all the time the people were wishing to tell her about America. Against her will, she felt, she was being forced into arguments about the relative merits of American and English customs. People from perfectly insignificant places thought it their duty to point out that the town they came from was by far the greatest in the world. She didn't like to say so, but it was really rather absurd; for surely the most biased American must see that England was more important than America.

At first she found no conversation at all; and at parties or at informal gatherings people had the abominable habit of sitting in a circle. But Boston surpassed her expectations. "The conversation was really worthy of a London dinner party"; and they were innocent of "the Albany sin of a circle". The man they saw most of was Mr. Daniel Webster, and they found him "the most generally informed and cleverest man that we have seen in America". Wherever they went, Philadelphia, Washington, Charleston, New Orleans, St. Louis or Pittsburgh, they found nothing so charming, so grateful and so much like home as the high society of Boston. Of course, there was plenty to interest and please Mrs. Hall. They met and dined with all the most prominent Americans, De Witt Clinton, William Astor, John Quincy Adams, the historian Prescott, the painter Gilbert Stuart. And if all else failed, they had baby Elizabeth with them; and Elizabeth was always making new friends and revealing new talents. But at the end of fourteen months they were glad to be sailing back to the Isle of Wight; and when they landed they were just as enchanted as they had hoped to be. One thing above all else delighted Basil. Once more they were in a country where footmen wore livery. It had been so long since they had seen a well-dressed servant.

ALAN PORTER

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ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

ESTIMATES IN ART (SECOND SERIES) *by Frank Jewett Mather, Jr.* (HOLT. $2.50)

THIS series includes sixteen essays on American painters of the nineteenth century and leads from Gilbert Stuart, "Face Painter and Feminist", to Arthur B. Davies. Between these two are such immediate successors of the Hudson River painters as Inness, Martin and Fuller and such immediate precursors of present-day painting as Eakins, Homer, Sargent and Chase. Written at different times for different publications, the essays are related only as a group of men living at the same time and meeting the same conditions are related. They are written calmly, as if a sense of justice, of poise, a thing of discipline, had stepped in to curb whatever impulsive flights the writer's own predilections might lead him into. When these do somehow manage to creep in—and they do, delightfully—they are followed by a denial or a semi-denial dictated by consciousness of other estimations, modern ones generally, which, while they may be running contrary to the writer's, must still, in his fair-mindedness or because of some imagined or real debt to his readers, be taken into account. He is like a man who in forcing himself to analyze his love, to judge her by the public as well as his private opinion, must end in nearly denying her altogether. Mr. Mather's discipline for this reason may be too strict. The reader is left by its manoeuvrings to choose for himself or most frighteningly at sea.

Mr. Mather is the Marquand Professor of art and archaeology at Princeton University. He has always been happier in dealing with old paintings. Here, being sure of the validity of his own judgement or at home with it, he will be definite, but easily, with none of that stridency of the essayist new to art (for some unknown reason numbered in thousands) who, at every turn of the long road, discovers facts and theories already thoroughly charted. However, as critic of the New York Evening *Post* in its literary days, he has lived through a great many fashions in modern art—seen Auguste Rodin pushed off a god's throne and left with scant standing room among the multitude of has-beens, for one example, and for others, the rapid displacement of favourites which followed since the painters of the old official Salons were collected with the usual swinging blindness of American enthusiasm. He is a rare man able to look at pictures and to judge them on their own merits. It is undoubtedly for this reason that he is able to talk of George Inness and George Fuller and Homer D. Martin (names practically dismissed by the day's fashionables) fairly, noting the sweetness in their messages, without lamenting, with the now so current impatience, their slimness.

GUY PÈNE DU BOIS

AFTERTHOUGHTS *by Logan Pearsall Smith* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $1.35)

THIS new sheaf will be welcome to the initiated; that is, to Logan Pearsall Smith addicts, who have been growing legion since the publication of his first *Trivia*. It is safe to say that the Smithian aphoristic essay is unique and inimitable. In *Trivia* and *More Trivia* the units are single short paragraphs on a multitude of topics with the phrases neatly turned and the sentiments succinctly presented. *Afterthoughts* is more gnomic

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than the *Trivia* volumes, and as a collection less substantial, but Pearsall Smith's epigrammatic power can be seen here with no diminution. These epigrams are grouped around six very general (and why not as general as can be?) subjects—*Life and Human Nature, Age and Death, Other People, In the World, Art and Letters, Myself.* When an artist speaks intelligently about his art, it behooves us to listen: "Aphorisms are salted and not sugared almonds at Reason's feast"; "And what pursuit is more elegant than that of collecting the ignominies of our nature and transfixing them for show, each on the bright pin of a polished phrase?"; "The great art of writing is the art of making people real to themselves with words." The difficulty of cataloguing Pearsall Smith's philosophy arises from his catholicity, his paradoxes and subtlety. If a first reading of his "sententiae" tempts one to think that the whole point lies on the surface, the only proper advice to such a reader is "Read again, and think yourself".

Perhaps the secret of Mr. Smith's power over the word lies in his lore, for he is one of the most learned English philologists, and perhaps the best stylist of them all. His *The English Language*, in the *Home University Library*, is a most reliable book wherewith to show the general reader that our language has its own intensely interesting history; his *Words and Idioms*, destined for the more advanced student, is a mine of fact and a joy to read. Mr. Smith knows the English idiom, and he can use it.

RICHMOND P. BOND

CHAUCER *by John Masefield* (MACMILLAN. $1.00)

"HERE is God's plenty", said Dryden; and his phrase has remained the classical appreciation of Chaucer. It is none too easy to write of him. As Mr. Masefield remarks, he was a story-teller. His poems were meant to be "said or ellës sung". Such writers do not lend themselves readily to aesthetic definitions; or perhaps we should rather say, they are difficult problems for anyone who sets up as a message-finder. Even Mr. Masefield, a story-writer himself, finds it hard to make any definite or distinctive criticism of Chaucer. His final word in discussing *Troilus and Cressida*, for example, is another such grand and indiscriminate phrase as Dryden's:—"Here was a poet telling a long story with an unhappy end, in violation of the laws of art, and with an inconstant lady in it, in defiance of the laws of nature and morality. The tale however had one quality which was not in the critics' books of rules: it was alive". Perhaps because of this difficulty Mr. Masefield's essay is not so memorable as his Shakespearean criticism. It is a simple and genial attempt to trace Chaucer's development; to show him in the England and the London of his times; and to decide what part of his work is of durable interest and delight. The first paragraph will give a hint of his style; forty-three out of fifty-four words are of one syllable only.

ALAN PORTER

THE PHYSICAL BASIS OF RIME *by Henry Lanz* (STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. $6.75)

DR. LANZ tells us in his preface that this book is a by-product of his studies in logic:

"The author conceived . . . the rather novel idea of extending the strategic positions of modern realism beyond the boundary line of pure logic and applying its principles to the field of aesthetic. . . . In search of illustrative material for this new specific objectivity the author hit upon rhythm and rime. . . . They had their own laws that poets had to follow and were powerless to change. Their effect was precise and, evidently, easily transmissible. . . . They had a complex structure and a long history of growth. In a word, they behaved like phenomenological entities of some description. What was their nature? What was the secret of their effect upon the

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human mind?" ". . . Students, of both philosophy and linguistics, may profit somewhat from an attempt to construct such theory on a purely physical basis."

After this definition of his purpose, Dr. Lanz proceeds through a scholarly documentation of such scientific evidence (the recent enormous progress made in the mechanical reproduction of voice sounds) as is by the physicist usually taken for granted, to prove that a number of physical laws are the bases for our feeling about rime, rhythm, and the stanza formation of poetry. The proof runs through a number of steps:

1. Rime in any language is an acoustic phenomenon.
2. Vowels of speech (scientifically measured as sound waves) are musical chords or tone clusters. Through their repetition occurs something akin to the musical phrase. A vowel may be the key or tonic to which return is made.
3. Rime may be defined as a unit on key in the melody of vowels as perceived through the tone quality of the whole ending.
4. Rime has, therefore, as has melody, an association with a definite artistic reaction of a more or less pleasurable kind.
5. Rhythm, any repetition of identical or even similar sensory elements, is, in all languages, of two varieties: time and accent rhythm—occurring in individual proportions in different languages. Now rime serves to define the rhythmical phrases, or to point the rhythm which depends on the distribution of vowels (the rhythmical response) and the distribution of interruptions (the rhythmical response). Hence rime is not only the key to the melody of a particular line, it also attracts our attention to the rhythmically important places, the most important being the end of the line, and it further helps to arrange the verse lines into stanzas.

This is the proof Dr. Lanz offers that rime, a special kind of melody, and poetry which is controlled by rime cannot be adequately described by reference to various degrees of pleasure derived from it; that—and this is the author's declaration of the independence of aesthetic phenomena—although the content of emotions aroused by an aesthetic process is given to us through mental processes, it is not dependent upon those processes for its specific quality of structure, nor can emotions be intellectually comprehended. In other words, Dr. Lanz would establish the complete independence of a large realm of phenomena known as aesthetic and constantly being misjudged by foreign ideas or feelings. Poetry does not *express*, he states, it *creates* emotions—this it does as an acoustic phenomenon, and more or less aside from its meaning.

Following the technical analysis and proof of his theory, Dr. Lanz introduces chapters on the historical development of rime, the history of free verse—a very long history indeed—and on the logic of emotions.

It seems inevitable that such a scientific study of the theory of rime and rhythm in poetry must be based on the elimination of a number of factors in order to isolate the particular factor for examination. The factors eliminated here are all those which may have to do with the meaning of poetry. The factor isolated is rime or vowel music, rhythm or phrasing. Is the emotional or musical effect of rime, without which Lanz states we should not be able to use it for rhythmic purposes, due only to the vowel cluster of which the word is composed or is it due in part to the meaning of the riming word?

Such scientific studies as this, Germanic as they are in method, do much to clarify our minds with respect to our definitions of the terminology of criticism; they do not, unless pushed too far, lessen the appreciation of the art of poetry. There is much in this book about rime and rhythm which we have always known, and which we find here restated according to a new methodology.

EDA LOU WALTON

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SHAKESPEARE, CHAPMAN AND SIR THOMAS MORE *by Arthur Acheson* (BRICK ROW BOOK SHOP. $3.00)

THIS absorbing book, "intended to provide a more definite basis for criticism and biography", fulfils its purpose in opening up a new and fruitful field of investigation, and should prove as valuable to students of Elizabethan drama as it is illuminating to those curious about the economy and management of the theatre which gave it birth. If Mr. Acheson makes some startling departures from the accepted canon and categorically denies the long-established authorship of several plays, he speaks with authority of thirty years' comparative study, and gives ample evidence for his conclusions. The "more definite basis" rests on the assumption that Shakespeare's "lost" years in London, 1586-1591, were, in fact, spent in apprenticeship to Burbage, first as bonded serving-man in the trade of playmaking, and, after two years, as company poet. This contention is supported by stylistic and historical evidence, ingeniously derived from the whole body of the plays of Chapman, Marlowe, Nashe, Peele, Kyd, Greene, Dekker, Munday, Heywood and Shakespeare, and is founded primarily on the trace of Shakespeare's autograph in *Sir Thomas More* (1589-90), a dramatic fragment showing the work of no less than seven hands.

Yet, great as is the literary interest of Mr. Acheson's argument, the animated personalities revealed behind the plays make an even stronger impression. A flood of light is thrown on the movements of the acting companies and we are shown the groups of licensed actors forming and re-forming under a series of official patrons, but actually under the direction of shrewd professional managers, taking with them at each migration as their most important assets, the company plays. It is the conveyance of all the popular plays from hand to hand in this manner, and the working over of the original texts by rival company poets which has for so long given the misleading impression that the "bards of passion and of mirth" produced their immortal works in continuous and amicable collaboration. In these crowded and lively pages Mr. Acheson discloses the rival poets' open and covert attacks upon each other, their fraudulent holding and withholding of manuscripts, portraits and caricatures then hardly disguised, but long since neglected among the dramatis personae, and subjects each clue to a threefold scrutiny which will convince the average reader and should gratify the most exacting controversialist.

OLGA KATZIN

THE MELODY OF CHAOS *by Houston Peterson* (LONGMANS, GREEN. $2.50)

THE poetry of Conrad Aiken gives Mr. Peterson his title and theme. *The Melody of Chaos* is primarily an Introduction to Aiken, containing full analyses of all the principal works and long illustrative excerpts. It is also a mental biography of the poet. If anyone wishes light on Aiken's poetry, this is the book to turn to. But Mr. Peterson has done more. His book is also a philosophic and critical discussion of the group to which Aiken belongs, which includes Proust, Joyce, and the T. S. Eliot of *The Waste Land*, and which Mr. Peterson appropriately calls the school of nihilism. It is furthermore, in connection with all these themes, a discursive survey into the causes and nature of this literary nihilism. Its diversity of subject-matter may prevent its wide recognition as authoritative on any of its themes, but it deserves consideration. It is learned but simple; and though it has chaos for a subject, it avoids the chaotic style. Its breadth, objectivity, and moderation are in its favour. Though an advocate of Aiken, Mr. Peterson is not a special pleader; and this fact the more readily convinces us that Aiken deserves greater consideration than he has generally been given. Whatever Aiken's rank relative to the more famous men of the

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school, Mr. Peterson proves his importance as stater of their philosophy.

"He has focused on the central matter of mental disintegration and emotional helplessness," says Mr. Peterson. Again: "He is an incorrigible victim of modernity and exemplifies in literature all those qualities so bitterly condemned by our humanist and neo-classic critics. He traffics with the unconscious, bows before 'the Great God Flux', exploits personal experiences directly and shamelessly, cultivates the blur and tries to convert poetry into a kind of absolute music. In short, a radical, confused, sentimental and bitter romanticist".

Though it might seem so, this is not condemnation, since Mr. Peterson believes it the only logical reaction to the modern predicament. To account for this predicament he names five chief causes: the scientific picture of the universe, the mechanization of living, the undermining of our moral tradition, the romantic movement, and psychology. He enlarges interestingly on all of these, but mainly on the last, which in the form of psycho-analysis was apparently most influential upon Aiken. Mr. Peterson himself uses the methods of psycho-analysis to explain Aiken's morbid tendencies.

It is a devastating picture which Mr. Peterson draws of what might—with apologies—be called the Aiken void. Nostalgia, *taedium vitae*, futility, nightmare, lust, perversion, split personality, the violent emotional oscillations of romantic irony, vague moodiness and concrete vision of horror, solipsistic dizziness, sadism, the dance of death. Yet after this appalling review, Mr. Peterson concludes surprisingly that Aiken has carried us "triumphantly" to the metaphysical bottom. We must not protest. "It would be absurd", he assures us, "to end with a paltry little response to Aiken's splendid nihilism. He has gone as far as possible in the direction of spiritual disorder, without plunging into madness. . . . Yet this later poetry of Aiken's is so honest, extravagant and inspired, that it is actually invigorating. It is so much richer than pale moderation."

After that a plea for moderation, "pale" or otherwise, is evidently improper! Certainly an assertion of the values in spiritual harmony will mean nothing to those who do not experience them, and whose tastes are so perverted that they actually prefer perversion. But we may venture two comments.

The first is that in a world of dubiety both poet and critic are too arrogantly certain of one thing at least: that existence *is* chaos. "Is not this," asks Mr. Peterson, after quoting an exceptionally "nihilistic" poem, "a picture of our world, looked at as nearly as possible without dogmas of hope or assumptions of order?" It certainly lacks dogmas of hope or assumptions of order; but it certainly is not without dogmas of despair and considerable assumptions of chaos. Yet on what does this certainty of chaos rest? Chiefly on psychoanalysis! On a mass of ingenious speculation, drawn from ambiguous data, experimentally unverifiable, and vitiated by suggestion, unconsciously conveyed by the analyst to his subject, of the theories he hopes to prove! Literary folk who found philosophies on such speculations show themselves not merely uncritical and unscientific; they betray their willingness to believe whatever will feed their romantic lust for horrors.

The book is indeed impressive in the way it demonstrates the ingenuity of the human imagination. Aiken has done a thorough job creating a world of chaos. But that world is his creation. Another person, on the basis of the same materials, will conceive a world which, if not heavenly, at least justifies hopeful work in building beauty and goodness into existence where they are lacking. And this latter person will have the assurance of fellowship with the noblest spirits in the long history of mankind, not to speak of the support of healthy common sense.

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON

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THE BOOKMAN'S MONTHLY SCORE

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE, LIFE MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, IN COÖPERATION WITH THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF AMERICA

It is, of course, only a coincidence that Dr. Axel Munthe's book and that of the Grand Duchess Marie should be running neck and neck in the race for fiction popularity. But it is curious, nevertheless, that Dr. Munthe's severest critic—as anyone who has read "Education of a Princess" will recognize—should be his principal competitor for the moment. The popularity of the Pershing book seems likely to endure for a while. General Grant's memoirs appeared just about as long after the Civil War as General Pershing's after the World War. And every man who fought under Grant, and had the price of the book, bought it. There weren't so many public libraries then, nor so many veterans. It easily may be that the Pershing book will sell fewer copies than Grant's, but be read by several times as many. F. P. S.

NOVELS

1. GRAND HOTEL	*Vicki Baum*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
2. YEARS OF GRACE	*Margaret Ayer Barnes*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
3. BACK STREET	*Fannie Hurst*	COSMOPOLITAN
4. CAKES AND ALE	*W. Somerset Maugham*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
5. IMPERIAL PALACE	*Arnold Bennett*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
6. THE BRIDGE OF DESIRE	*Warwick Deeping*	MCBRIDE
7. CIMARRON	*Edna Ferber*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
8. READER, I MARRIED HIM	*Anne Green*	DUTTON
9. SEED	*Charles G. Norris*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
10. ANGEL PAVEMENT	*J. B. Priestley*	HARPERS
11. PHILIPPA	*Anne Douglas Sedgwick*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
12. THE DEEPENING STREAM	*Dorothy Canfield*	HARCOURT, BRACE

GENERAL

1. EDUCATION OF A PRINCESS	*Marie, Grand Duchess of Russia*	VIKING
2. THE STORY OF SAN MICHELE	*Axel Munthe*	DUTTON
3. MY STORY*	*Mary Roberts Rinehart*	FARRAR & RINEHART
4. HUMANITY UPROOTED	*Maurice Hindus*	CAPE & SMITH
5 THE MYSTERIOUS UNIVERSE	*Sir James Jeans*	MACMILLAN
6. MY EXPERIENCES IN THE WORLD WAR*	*General John J. Pershing*	STOKES
7. LITTLE AMERICA	*Richard E. Byrd*	PUTNAM
8. THE SCIENCE OF LIFE*	*H. G. Wells, Julian Huxley, and G. P. Wells*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
9. THE GREEN PASTURES	*Marc Connelly*	FARRAR & RINEHART
10. INDIA: LAND OF THE BLACK PAGODA	*Lowell Thomas*	CENTURY
11. THE HUMAN MIND	*Karl Menninger*	KNOPF
12. THE LIVES OF A BENGAL LANCER	*Major F. Yeats-Brown*	VIKING

* *This title has not previously appeared in the Monthly Score.*

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ABOUT BOOK-COLLECTING

by Wilfred Partington

End-Papers and Marginalia

London, June.

ONE of these days the calm routine of some innocent bookman's life will be startled by the chance to acquire —doubtless for a very high price—a truly remarkable "association" item. This is a copy of the first edition of Shelley's *Queen Mab: A Philosophical Poem* (printed by P. B. Shelley, 23 Chapel Street, Grosvenor Square, 1813). The "association" interest of this copy is indicated in the printed description, before me, as follows:

. . . Author's own copy with his auto. signature on Title, and with notes in his handwriting on the following pages:—119, three words; [123], fourteen lines; [124], six lines; 167, four lines; 168, three lines; 169, three lines; 195, three lines, and 196, three words: lacks the last leaf (Q8), often mutilated; Q1 a little torn; and a few slight stains occur; half calf; sides rubbed; enclosed in a morocco case, lettered. . . .

There now! And to add to the glamour and authenticity of this copy the description is followed by a triple-asterisked note: "From the library of the late Lord Houghton"—he who was one of the Cambridge "Apostles"; and the intimate of Tennyson, Hallam and Thackeray. I quote one of the holograph notes:

Had as great pains been taken to preserve truth *in puris naturalibus*, as to disguise her in harlot's attire, there had been no want of geometry to take her dimensions; and had the hundredth part of the force been permitted or used to counteract prejudices, which has been employed to foster or rather compel them, the cruel reign of prejudice and error had long since been at an end.

"Hear! hear!" might have exclaimed the Apostles. Just so! But I have to interject that this is *not* Shelley—that he never wrote this note—that this copy of *Queen Mab* was not his—and that, in short, the excited bookman may return his check-book to his pocket, and save himself a few thousand dollars. Now for the Truth *in puris naturalibus* of this pretty piece of disguise.

The script of this copy's signature and annotations can be shown to be not that of Shelley; nor is the language of these precious notes that of the poet. There remains the definite association with Lord Houghton's library—a provenance that by the highest collecting standards should be unchallengeable. For Lord Houghton was full of interest in Shelley and Keats, and foregathered with men like Swinburne, Locker, Forman, William Rossetti, Garnett, Dowden, Stopford Brooke and De Tabley who concerned themselves so deeply in the works of the two poets. He would have talked about and exhibited such an important copy as this; but

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he never did, as is vouched for by our great specialist, Mr. T. J. Wise, who entered the Shelley circle in 1879, or some six years before Lord Houghton died. Nor is it likely that his son, the present Marquis of Crewe—a not less ardent bookman—would not have known about such a copy when the Houghton library was sold after its owner's death.

The history of this *Queen Mab* is that it was fabricated about the year 1845 by the forger De Gibler. It was sold to Lord Houghton in 1851, coming from the library of John Wilks, M.P. for Boston (Lincolnshire). When Lord Houghton discovered that the notes were spurious, he pasted pieces of paper over them in order to hide them; and used the book as an ordinary copy. Following the disposal of Lord Houghton's collection, the copy has passed through different hands; and at some time or another these pieces of paper have been removed, explaining the large dark stains which cover the paper in every instance where a note and the signature occur. The copy was described for sale in Messrs. Sotheby's catalogue for April 27 and 28 last—an accident due to the temporary indisposition of the cataloguer—and remedied, after it had been examined by Mr. Wise, by the withdrawal of the item and its return to the owner. As a fact there are in existence two genuine author's own copies of *Queen Mab* with extensive revisions and interlineations: the one belongs to Mr. Wise, and is fully described in his *A Shelley Library* (privately printed, 1924) and in *The Ashley Library Catalogue*; the other belonged to H. Buxton Forman, and was included in the sale of his library in New York in 1920, realizing $6,000, although unlike the first, lacking title and dedication leaves, which the poet had torn out.

Thus is exposed a spurious "author's own" *Queen Mab*, whose existence would otherwise be fraught with risk to the collecting world. I should have hesitated so soon to devote another End-Paper to the perpetrations of these literary forgers were it not that THE BOOKMAN, by such exposure, is rendering a service to the public.

JEAN ARMOUR'S SILK STOCKINGS

Second-hand booksellers' catalogues flow into my library as the sea-tides come in at the end of my lawn, twice a day—except that the postman has Sunday off, and Neptune doesn't. And like the sea, these catalogues are always the same—yet ever changing. But the latter yield rather more surprises, for I am a better browser than beachcomber. Neither the least nor the last are those that come from Mr. G. H. Last (The Broadway, Bromley, Kent, England), whose lists generally have some out-of-the-way items. His latest turns aside from books and autograph letters to devote a corner to Curios and Relics. Item 347 was one over which I paused. It comprised a pair of black silk stockings which had belonged to Jean Armour—a piece of her wedding-dress—one of her silk handkerchiefs—and a piece of wood from the bed on which Burns died—(with letters of authentication). It is almost the story in relics of Rabbie and Jean, whose best authentication is in the immortal poems, where are so many allusions to beds and "the bonnie lassie." As to stockings, Burns could sing:

> On Fasteneen we had a rockin,
> To ca' the crack and weave our stockin;
> And there was muckle fun and jokin,
> Ye need na doubt:
> At length we had a hearty yokin,
> At sang about.

Nowadays ladies' stockings are finer and seen to more advantage; but we have no Burns. But to books.

THE TWO KINGSLEYS

I see from X. Y. Z.'s table of "Demands for First Editions" that Henry Kingsley comes at last into the list. Among authors who are also book-collectors there has long been an opinion that the appreciation of Henry's works was disproportionate as compared with

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that of his brother Charles; and Hugh Walpole and Michael Sadleir, in particular, will both welcome this sign of the collecting times recorded by X. Y. Z. I note that Mr. Raphael King prices a first edition (3 volumes, cloth, 1859) of Henry's first novel, *The Recollections of Geoffrey Hamlyn* at $100.

A COPPARDLY BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mr. Jacob Schwartz has compiled a *Bibliography of the Writings of Alfred Edgar Coppard* (The Ulysses Bookshop), in which seventeen works are collated, followed by details of anthologies, translations, reviews, unreprinted tales, uncollected tales, introductions, etc., in which his pen has been concerned. The book is greatly enhanced in interest by Mr. Coppard's Foreword and Notes in which he has endeavoured to contribute his quantum of biographical and bibliographical information; and he has succeeded, amusingly, gallantly and Coppardly. The first collation, of course, is that of *Adam and Eve and Pinch Me*, which also has the additional importance of being the first book of the Golden Cockerel Press. The compiler notes that all the copies he has examined have "proved different in certain respects". He details the five variations he considers most important; but unfortunately has to admit that it has not been possible to determine any priority of issue of these variants. But the one with the page 12 misprinted headline reading "Adam & Ene & Pinch Me", seems the most important; and surely suggests a clue which either the compiler or Mr. Coppard—who, unlike many of his contemporaries, has a keen eye for bibliographical points—may still be able to build more definitely on. Of *The Black Dog and Other Stories*, reproductions show the difference between a faked title-page and the authentic title of this first edition; but the bibliographer does not mention the point, although Mr. Coppard in his notes says that he has seen several copies, purporting to be first editions, which have reprinted title-pages pasted in place of the original one. Typographically, the fake would hardly deceive a dog, black, white or tan. *The Higgler*, the title of the fifteenth book collated, and apparently limited to 39 copies issued at $65 a copy, is stated by the author to be a pirated production (by The Chocorua Press, Chelsea, New York), being "issued without reference to or permission from me, on the assumption that it had not been copyrighted. Eventually I was able to extract a small fee from the publisher. I have not seen a copy".

A PUBLISHERS' HADES

One word as to the production of this Bibliography. Its title is printed on a paper label pasted on the spine, which in my opinion is unsuitable for what, after all, is (or should be) a book-tool. An awful fate awaits all who have issued books with paper labels. There is a Hades prepared for them consisting of millions of miles of crowded book-shelves, the volumes on which have all lost their labels. The doomed publisher, hands tied by binders' tapes, spends Eternity wandering up and down, seeking his own indistinguishable productions, spurred on by the spirits of infuriated researchers armed with triple-pointed paper-knives four feet long.

RECENT CATALOGUES

Three catalogues just to hand concerning Americana cover by thousands of fascinating items an extraordinary wide range of national and individual life. From the Rosenbach Company (15 East 51st Street, New York City) is *A Catalogue of an Exhibition of Memorable Documents in American History*. Here is described the first autograph letter known to have been written in and sent from America, the correspondent being the son of Christopher Columbus. Of Cuba: "there must be some things on this island which would be of advantage to His Highness". Most assuredly; but the advantage was to be lost—as it was again nearly 250 years later when Robert Dinwiddie is writing (in

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a folio page letter 1754) to De Lancey concerning the Albany plan of Union, the earliest step towards American independence. But there are many alarms and much sacrifice before the Great Achievement whose history is told in these documents; and Gladstone is *so* certain in this uncertain world that the union cannot be enforced. Then Robert E. Lee writes a brave farewell; Sherman dictates the terms; overleaf, Guiteau (Garfield's assassin) is offering a bribe of $5,000 for freedom; and so to President Harding who sends curious letters to "My dear Jim" (April 22 and May 1, 1918) at a time when "we are in war—hellish war . . . I know Carrie is loyal and helpful. But prejudices and Passions are not at my Command". A remarkable collection of documents this; and the Rosenbach catalogue does it full justice.

From script to printed word, much the same story is told, with many more intriguing asides, in Catalogue No. 203 from Goodspeed's Book Shop (7 Ashburton Place, Boston, Mass.). Herein nearly 2,000 items of Americana—books, prints, broadsides, maps, etc.—are described. The compiler makes some attractive points, and he shows a sense of humour in his notes. One, to a Broadside [1841] *The Execution of Charles Cook for the Murder of Mrs. C. Merry*, reads:—"A poem of nineteen eight-line stanzas, containing the touching couplet—

> "I hurled her down and stamp'd on her breast,
> Which render'd her senseless or greatly distressed."

The third catalogue, from Messrs. Foyles, Ltd. (Charing Cross Rd., London), is compiled for America rather than being one of Americana (not that the latter is absent). Such items as Hennepin's *New Discovery of a Vast Country in America* (London, 1698); *Memoirs of a Life, chiefly passed in Pennsylvania*, (Boards, Edin., 1822); the Abbé Raynals *Revolution in America*, (Dublin, 1781); and a fine copy of the London edition of Mark Twain's *A Dog's Tale* [1904], which is claimed to have preceded the American edition, show the efforts of the compiler in this the firm's first catalogue priced in dollars and intended only for distribution in the United States.

The Demand for First Editions

The following table, compiled from various sources, shows the average weekly demand in England (on behalf of both American and English collectors) for modern first editions during the last month. The demands show the same low level as in the previous list. The sudden concentration on "firsts" of A. P. Herbert has brought him progressively to the head of the list, in which are several new names. A notably frequent request for a single book was that of H. A. Manhood's *Nightseed*, although—as in previous months—not coming within the limits of the table; while apart from the usual desiderata for Swinburne items, books on this poet and his works are apparently much needed in several quarters.

A. P. Herbert	26
John Galsworthy	19
Arnold Bennett	14
J. B. Priestley	14
Hugh Walpole	14
Rudyard Kipling	13
D. H. Lawrence	13
Una Silberrad	13
Anthony Trollope	12
Henry Williamson	12
Lewis Carroll	11
Sir A. Conan Doyle	11
William Wordsworth	11
Sir Rider Haggard	10
Leigh Hunt	9
Kate Greenaway	8
W. H. Hudson	8
Henry Kingsley	8
Somerset Maugham	8
Charles Reade	7
Sir Walter Scott	7

X. Y. Z.

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